613 794 inflicting or witholding sickness and all types of misfortune to the lineage, and, to ward off these, was propitiated with offerings of cooked food annually and in special emergencies on the advice of the astrologer as diviner. In particular, she[1/1]
[842] had power to bless with fertility women of the lineage, and so was worshipped before a pre-puberty marriage rite and also at the first menstruation ceremonies of a girl.

[778] Though not jointly owned by the lineage but rather by that branch of it which inherited the gardens on which they stood, the oldest ancestral house of the lineage, from which its forbears sprang, the original ancestor shrine in this house, and the sacred snake-grove in its [48] garden, were regarded with reverence by all lineage-members and stood as symbols of their unity. These are discussed below in connection with rites relating to the property-group.

613 (3) Fission and adoption in the Lineage

808 Since lineages were usually groups of actual
621 and not putative matrilineal kin, it was inevitable that (since the birthrate is not uniform throughout a population) while some might remain stable in numbers over generations, others would expand greatly, and others would decrease and become in danger of extinction. When great growth in numbers in a lineage took place, some segments appear even traditionally to have hived off to other villages occupied by their own sub-caste where kanam paddy lands and janmam garden lands were available. Such a segment, on moving to a new village, was adopted as retainers

[1/1] [the dharma devi, or lineage goddess---Analyst]

613 by the local janmi, was formally accepted into
608 the Nayar assembly of its new area, and was
621 accorded enangar relations with some of the lineages already present. If the incoming segment was small, it was customary for it to ally itself with one or other established lineages for the performance of the first tali-rite. This set up a bond of fictitious matrilineal kinship between the new segment and the old lineage, which must henceforth observe exogamy. Such fictitious matrilineal kinship, while serving to keep stable the size and number of exogamous groups in the village, was relevant only to inter-group relations in the microcosmic political life of [49] the village and not to matters which concerned only lineage members and had to do with their interpersonal family life. Thus, death and birth pollutions were not extended to include the incoming segment, which for several generations observed these in common with other segments of its parent-lineage, and with them also continued to worship the lineage goddess in their ancestral village. After some generations, however, the old matrilineal ties were forgotten or (if distance from the parent lineage was great) deliberately sundered, until in time even the rule of exogamy might unwittingly be broken and a division of the original lineage finally completed. If it had increased in numbers the new segment became a complete lineage in its own right; if not, it might gradually come to be regarded as a "real" genealo[illegible]cal branch of its host lineage in the new village.

Even within one village, a lineage might

613 become so large that over many generations
608 members of distant segments forgot that they
621 were matrilineal kin, ceased to observe joint pollution, and finally broke the rule of exogamy. One case of this came to my notice in the Cochin village I studied. A man and woman of two lineages which were not enangar, and for some reason unknown to my informants, had never been known to intermarry, entered into a liaison. Certain elders of the village then began to look into the history of the two lineages and to wonder whether long ago, they might have been matrilineal kin or putative matrilineal kin by joint performance of the [50] tali-rite. As they were unable to foist their doubts on to younger members of the village, however, the liaison continued and thus what was probably an ancient tie of lineage exogamy was tacitly broken.

[597] Cases of extinction of a lineage were rare, since if one property group were without women in any generation it was customary to adopt one or more girls from collateral property groups of the same lineage and thus continue to perpetuate all the property-groups. In rare cases of the extinction of a lineage, its jenmam lands eschested to the king for reallocation to another lineage, and its kanam lands to the janmi. To-day, the property of a group with no women is divided equally between surviving male members and inherited after their deaths by their wives and children.

613 (4) Succession and Segmentation in the Lineage

587 Among retainer Nayars whose lineages owned

592 [582] with their parents into any convenient vacant room. At the same time, the separate, unique role of each woman as potential founder of a new taravad is recognized in certain rules: both sororate and sororal polygymy are traditionally forbidden, for example, since the inter-personal unity between sisters, as well as their separate positions each at the head of a line of matrilineal descendants, must not be endangered or distorted by their extra-lineage ties.

592 [72] (2) The Traditional Institution of Marriage.

581 Consistent with the unity and multiplex economic, legal and ceremonial functions of the taravad as a corporate group, marriage was traditionally the slenderest of ties, while as a social concept fatherhood scarcely existed. 592 582 608 We have mentioned already that at the tali-rite of retainer, middle class and servant Nayars and of temple servants, the immature girls of a lineage were collectively "married" and divorced before puberty by their local caste group as a whole, represented by their individual enangar. In desavari, chiefly and royal lineages the tali was usually tied by a man of a higher sub-caste from which the lineage was wont to draw lovers for its women in hypergamous liaisons. The women of desavari lineages were thus usually "married" by naduvari men, naduvari and royal women either by Nambudiri men or by men of some higher-ranking royal lineage more ancient than their own. In all castes, the tali-tier had no subsequent responsibilities and if he wished need never visit the woman again.

592 His relationship was however remembered, and
782 he was regarded as the ritual father (appan) of
608 the woman's children, in contrast to their genitor or to the step-father who happened currently to be visiting a woman, these latter both being
608 called acchan. Ritual fatherhood meant nothing
764 at all except that at the death of the tali-tier,
602 the woman and all her children must observe death pollution. Death pollution was otherwise observed only for matrilineal kin; it was not until recently observed for the genitor or other lovers of the mother. Its observance for the tali-tier shows that even the Nayars, with their extreme emphasis on the matrilineal line and total exclusion of the husband and father from economic, legal or ceremonial rights, recognized the field of kinship to extend beyond the unilineal descent-group, and felt the need to give ceremonial recognition [73] to the concepts of marriage and of paternity, even though they gave none to the individual husband and father.

595 After the tali-rite and shortly before or after
833 puberty, a girl might enter into a number of unions with men of her own subcaste (including, if both wished, the ritual husband of the tali-rite) or of an appropriate higher subcaste. Similarly, a man might cohabit with any number of mistresses from his own or an appropriate lower subcaste. A man usually visited a mistress after supper, and left before breakfast; even today in orthodox matrilocal households men eat with their sisters and mothers and visit or accept food in the conjugal house in the daytime only on special invitation from the wife's karanavan.

627 Murder among the Nayars
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sometimes led to blood feuds between lineages (*ibid.*, I: 195–196). Chiefs could usually cut short a feud between commoner lineages, but even these feuds occasionally ran their course for a generation, although cognatic and affinal ties between lineages helped to bring them to a close. Greater feuds were sometimes waged between the lineages of village headmen or chiefs of adjacent districts, in which the commoner Nayars of each area might participate.

Matrilineal Units

THE CLAN

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Among Nambiar commoners the largest matrilineal unit was the clan (*vamsham* or *illam*). It had the functions of exogamy and mutual hospitality. Common descent was merely stipulated and not demonstrated and the order of segmentation within the clan was unknown.
[635] The clan might be dispersed throughout a kingdom or even, perhaps, between kingdoms. Its members might point to a particular village as their original ancestral site, but each clan seems to have been much older and its history less clearly documented than among Nayar retainers in Central Kerela. There is no doubt that clans became much more dispersed in the nineteenth century than they had traditionally been because of the development of new areas of cultivation and increased mobility between villages. However, even traditionally the clan seems to have had more members and a wider spread than in the Central area. Its characteristics may be attributed to several factors. First, Nambiars were not divided into separate retainer castes. Thus, although the majority of commoner marriages were within the village,
[582] Nambiars did have greater freedom to marry and move more freely between villages throughout the realm. Lacking a strong superordinate political structure and internal caste differentiation to give form to their relationships, they had larger kinship units. Newcomers to a village probably did not need to become affiliated to its assembly by order
[608] of a superior political authority. Instead, they could probably affiliate themselves with their clan fellows and so at once be provided also with classificatory affines in other clans. Second, Nambiars practised
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[425]
avunculocal residence; husband and wife lived in the husband's matrilineal ancestral house (Buchanan, 1807: 513–514). Sons normally moved back to their own matrilineal homes at puberty, but daughters moved to their husbands' homes. However, Nambiar fathers occasionally gave privately acquired land to their wives and children when they were able. The children might then settle permanently in

pregnant woman, taking a sword, generally kept for this purpose, and holding it in 843
the left hand points it to her mouth. The juice is then poured on it in such a way as 613
to fall by drops into her open mouth. After this, one of the women of the *enangar* [604]
group smears the body and head of the pregnant woman with coco-nut oil and takes [593]
her to the tank. She is also required to choose one from a collection of different grains, [787]
and it is believed you can say from the choice what the sex of the child is going to be. [842]

The significance of the ceremony seems to be twofold. First, it is the official 843
notification to the allied families as well as to the local village groups of the fact that 613
a woman is lawfully pregnant in the house. The intervention of the *Ammāri* or the 182
mother's brother's wife is supposed to show that everything is as it ought to be. [604]
It is, therefore, in the first place merely a social announcement. Secondly, the 843
actual ceremony with the sword is supposed to have the effect of making the child 182
a warrior, and it is believed to impart the virtues of bravery, manliness and honest 789
dealing. It is, therefore, in the classification of Van Genepp, a rite direct, sympathetic, automatic and positive. The tamarind juice is believed to create sensitiveness and honour. It is a "contagionist" rite. Whenever a man shows cowardice, the question that is asked as a mark of contempt is: "Were you not born after *Pulicudi?*" or "did not your mother drink the tamarand juice?"

After the *Pulicudi* there are many prohibitions which a pregnant woman has to 843
respect. Of this the most important is the absolute sexual tabu which dates from the *Pulicudi* to forty days after the childbirth. Other tabus are mainly connected with food and are mostly "contagionist" positively or negatively. Thus the woman is not supposed to take very warm food, as it might scorch the head of the child; she is not supposed to eat much hot food (chilis, pepper, etc.), because it might put out the eyes of the child. There are no definite rules about these, but every mother in her desire to do the child no possible harm keeps herself away from all doubtful matter.

After the birth of the child there is a mild pollution (as compared to the strong 846
untouchable pollution caused by death) in the family. This pollution does not carry 783
any disabilities except the prohibition to enter any sacred precincts. On the fifteenth day there is a purificatory ceremony, but there are no festivities or celebrations connected with it.

The mother and the child are accommodated in a special room which no man may enter. Unmarried girls, unless they are little children, are also not allowed to go near. The child, of course, can be seen by all after the cutting and burying of the umbilical cord. It is handed round to the father and other interested relations.
No kind of food except the mother's milk is given to it, and, if the mother died at the 853
birth of the child, it is generally given the milk of some relations or even of outsiders
who have children of almost the same age. The person whose milk the child thus 846
drinks, though she be an outsider, is considered equal to its own mother, and her 608 ●
children are considered the same as own brothers. There is a story of a Nāyar

853 king who as a child lost his mother and was therefore fed on the milk of an attendant
846 woman, refusing to punish her son after repeated acts of treason on the ground that
● 608 an ocean of milk flowed between them which a drop of blood would pollute for ever.

852 On the twenty-eighth day the child undergoes two ceremonies. The first is
301 called *Erupathettu Kettuka*, or the "Tying of the twenty-eighth day." Before that
789 day the child is not allowed to wear any ornaments. On the twenty-eighth day a
silver or gold belt, or a mere cord with an ornament in the shape of a heart or a laurel leaf at the front, is tied to the waist of the child. The laurel leaf was most certainly meant as a charm in ancient days, while now it is nothing more than an ornament. The waist-belt occasionally has attached to it amulets made sacred by the repetition of *mantrams* or magical formulæ over it. Such amulets are worn for the purpose of preventing disease and keeping the child safe from the demons and other evil spirits.[1]

553 After this comes the name-giving ceremony. The astrologer announces the star
787 under which the child is born and presents the horoscope. Then he mentions the
initial letters of the names. Each star has generally two or three letters, and the whole of Sanskrit and Malayalam can be drawn upon for the names of deities beginning with those letters. The choice is really very wide, even with the most difficult initial letters.

852 The child is not supposed to be carried out of its mother's family till the sixth
602 month. Then, on an auspicious day it is taken to the father's house (if the father
431 is a Nāyar) by the mother, with some tokens of respect to the father's sister. These
[824] presents generally are tobacco leaves (always a mark of respect among the Nāyars),
betel, etc. The father's family generally gives a certain sum of money for the expenses of the coming ceremony.

852 These proceedings are preliminary to the ceremony of *Choru Koda*, or the giving
262 of rice. For the first six months the child is given only the cooked flour of dried
plantain fruits. Rice, which is the chief food of the Nāyars, is strictly prohibited
[123] before the *Choru Koda*. As a boy of fourteen or fifteen, I have many times officiated
[613] in this ceremony, on one occasion as a member of the father's family and on others as
a member of the maternal *Tharawad*. What is done is that the child is taken to the temple by its mother, accompanied by some women of the *Enangu* group, together with a male representative from the father's house (if the father is a Nāyar) and
[782] one from the mother's own family. There is an offering to the god of the temple
[783] in the form of rice cooked with milk and sugar, and all the party, after purifying

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[241] [1] The question of origins is very difficult, yet we cannot pass without noticing the idea
that the loin cords are the beginnings of dress. Professor Wilhelm Wundt, in his well-known book
[114] on *The Elements of Folk Psychology*, has shown conclusively that it has no reference to the
development of clothing, but is entirely magical in its purpose (pp. 86–87). The prevalent custom among the Nāyars supports this view. The custom can be understood only in relation to the general beliefs about cord-magic and the efficacy of amulets attached to waistbands.

595 the last fifty years. All the evidence that we have of this custom among the Nāyars in
175 the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, are from foreign travellers who, it
[609] must be remembered, were not allowed to come within sixty yards of a Nāyar house.
[114] Their evidence, therefore, is an extremely unsatisfactory ground for dogmatising on
Nāyar customs. On the other hand, the extensive Malayalam literature of that
595 period contains no single allusion to polyandry. The works of Kunchan Nambiar,
174 whom it is no exaggeration whatever to compare to Molière, though he describes
538 minutely the social life of the Nāyars of the early eighteenth century with its laxity
of morals, redeemed only by chivalry of conduct, makes no mention whatever of
polyandry. On the other hand, in a famous passage he makes the declaration:
"It is against the laws of all castes for a woman to have four or five husbands."

Nalanchu barthavoru thikku thanatu
Nalu jatikkum Viddhichatallorkanam.

595 How far this statement is decisive it is difficult to say. But one thing seems to
174 be clear from it, that the idea in itself was repugnant to the community as a whole,
though individuals might have practised it here and there.[1]

V.—BIRTH AND FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

844 Among the Nāyars, as among all the people whose life is regulated by magico-religious customs, child-birth is an event of great and mysterious significance. Especially is this the case with regard to the first child. Therefore the ceremonies of nativity are of an intenser and more magical character during the time of the first pregnancy than during subsequent ones. Indeed, the mysterious nature of childbearing is entirely lost after the first time, and the ceremonies on subsequent occasions are only a few tabus, which are generally, in the phraseology of Van Genepp, "rites dynamistes directs et negatives."

843 The most important of the pre-natal ceremonies is *Pulicudi*,[2] or the drinking
613 of the tamarind juice; and the customs relating it are as follows: On the appointed
day all the *enangars* (people belonging to the same kingship organization) come to
the house early in the morning, and the pregnant woman is taken out by one of them
and bathed, after rubbing oil all over her. Then she is dressed for the occasion
[564] and, entering the house from the north, sits looking eastward. The astrologer,
[787] who being of a lower caste commonly stands in the outer courtyard, calculates the
auspicious hour. He sends word when the time is come, and the *Ammāci* (the
[604] wife of the mother's brother, and mother-in-law by right of the brother) pours a few
[593] drops of tamarind juice in a small silver bowl. The brother or the uncle of the

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[1] See Note 3, Appendix.

[114] [2] Dr. Rivers makes some obviously erroneous deductions based upon this word, for which see note on "The Similarities between Nāyars and the Todas," Appendix, Note 2.

Kerala AW 11

601, 113, 59, 58, 611, 428

[For information pertaining to the above categories, see 5: Karve AW1 India, category 116, pp. 252-270.]

565 into 64 gramams (caste areas), within each of
631 which a Nambudiri assembly composed of the
623 oldest members of the patrilineal extended families of the area met periodically to arrange public ceremonies and tried cases of offence against caste laws. Within each gramam, the Nambudiris
[564] were divided into ranked subcastes according to their wealth and ritual functions; these,
565 however, need not concern us here. Over the
631 whole area, a dignitary known as the Aravancheri
693 Tamburakkal, [12] who resided in Travancore, was universally acknowledged as the ritual and administrative leader of the Nambudiris. This high priest was accorded the right to crown the kings of both Calicut and Cochin, though these rulers were traditionally at enmity. His jurisdiction in matters of the religious law governing social relations between castes, was acknowledged throughout the area. The field of social relations of the Nambudiris was thus the whole of Kerala.

565 The ritual prestige of Nambudiris was supported
596 by their wealth: each patrilineal extended family owned the land in at least one village, and in addition local groups of family heads managed lands owned by important Brahman temples in
[611] each kingdom. The Nambudiris had a patrilineal descent system of a peculiar type described below.

565 Below the Nambudiris in ritual rank came the
613 royal matrilineal lineages of Calicut, Walluvanad
631 and Cochin. Though undoubtedly Nayar in origin and general culture, each of these lineages considered itself superior in ritual rank to its

564 servants, nowadays [20] collectively called Ambalavasis. 744 The highest of these were the Chakkyars or reciters of Puranic stories, and the Pushpagans or flower-gatherers for temples. 611 These two castes had a patrilineal descent-system of the same type as Nambudiris, and are said to have once been Nambudiris who were degraded for ritual offences. They ranked below Nambudiris and above Nayars and the matrilineal temple servant castes. These latter in- 533 cluded Nambyars, a small caste whose work was to accompany Chakkyar recitations on a metal drum; Psharodis and Variyars, both of whom traditionally sweep the temple, clean temple vessels and make garlands for the idols; Puduvals or drummers on a drum called maddalam; and Marars or regular drummers on another drum called chenda.

The temple-servant castes were small and were chiefly congregated in villages owned by Nambudiri landlords or by large temples. Four main types of temple were owned by the higher castes of Malabar. First came large and wealthy temples owned and managed entirely by groups of Nambudiri landlords and dedicated to one of the orthodox Brahmanical male deities of India, usually Siva or Vishnu. Second came the private temple of each individual Nambudiri family in villages owned by Nambudiris; these were small replicas of the first type, dedicated to the same types of deities. Third came the large temples, one of which was associated with each 776 royal and chiefly matrilineage. These were usually dedicated to Bhagavadi or Bhadrakali, the Nayar goddess of war, smallpox and the soil.

564 within a few feet. Equal interdining took place
[264] only between members of the same caste or sub-
caste, but at a higher caste feast members of
lower castes might receive food from higher
caste hosts. The Nambudiris, royalty, chiefs,
temple servants, retainers, middle-class and
servant Nayars thus collectively formed the
"good" castes of the society. Nambudiris and
[611] two small castes of their temple servants were
patrilineal; all the rest were matrilineal. (1)

[361] Below all these castes, living in a separate
part of the village, were the "low" or "pollut-
[783] ing" castes. These included in order of rank,
Iravas or toddy-tappers and tenant-farmers, with
20 to 50 households per village; Kanisans (as-
trologers) with one to three households per vil-
lage; the artisan castes (blacksmiths, gold-
smiths, carpenters, bell-metal workers and
stone-masons, who ranked equally) each with one
to three houses per village; low caste washermen
and barbers (who ranked equally) each with one
to five houses per village; and bow-makers, each
with about one to ten houses per village. Iravas,
[611] Kanisans, washermen and barbers had double
[595] unilineal descent: [25] patrilineal, patrilocal ex-
[614] tended families with fraternal polyandry, cross-c
cut by large exogamous dispersed matrilineal
clans. Artisans and bow-makers had patrilineal
descent with patrilocal extended families and
[437] fraternal polyandry. All of these castes worked
for each other and for the "good" castes of the
524 village. Iravas, the most numerous and influen-
427 tial, owned their own house-sites and leased rice-
lands and other garden lands from the matrilineal

564 ritual pollution decreed that the several lower
783 castes might not touch each other, and that members of each lower caste, according to their ritual rank, must refrain from approaching members of the "good" castes within distance ranging from 15 to 40 feet.

564 Finally, on the outskirts of the village, in a
[361] separate area, lived the serf-castes of Parayas
437 and Pulayas. Parayas were a small caste of basket and umbrella-makers; in each village two or three households had a village right to serve all castes above them. Pulayas were until 1850 the agricultural serfs of Nayars, temple-servants and Nambudiris. Each property-group of these castes owned one or more families of Pulayas as its ancestral property who could be bought and sold. Food, household materials and clothing were provided for serfs by their owners. The Pulayas were freed by law in 1850, since when they have been landless agricultural labourers serving the "good" castes and Iravas for daily wages in kind. As "exterior" castes, Parayas
[783] and Pulayas may not approach "good" castes within a distance of about 60 feet and may not enter the "good" area of the village or walk on the main roads. (These rules were however abolished by law at Independence in 1947.) [27] Each caste is endogamous and the two may not
[611] interdine. Unlike the higher castes they have a bilateral kinship system without unilineal descent groups. In addition to these Hindu castes
361 there were and are in Kerala large groups of
563 Muslims and Christians. (2) Christians had their separate villages and were divided into castes in a similar manner to Hindus. Muslims

514 was confined to the village or (in the case of the
571 smaller castes) a group of adjacent villages.
631 For retainer-Nayars, apart from their excursions in war, it was confined to the group of adjacent villages of one subcaste; for temple servants and Nayar village headmen, the nad; for naduvaris and kings, the kingdom; and for Nambudiris, Kerala. It may be hypothesized that this variation in the field of social relations of the different ranked orders of the society is intrinsic in any feudal system with centralized political institutions.

582 (4) Hypergamy in the Upper Castes

●611 Each of the castes below middle class Nayars was endogamous, as is usually in the caste system throughout India. But among the higher "clean" castes, a complicated system of hypergamous unions linked the several groups. By hypergamy I mean the union of a man of higher caste with a woman of lower caste.

582 In discussing hypergamy, it is necessary first
611 to explain the descent-system of Nambudiris.
596 In the patrilineal [36] extended family of Nambudiris, only the eldest son was permitted to marry, with Vedic rites, within his own caste
[595] and beget children for his family. Younger sons
had recognized liaisons (not initiated with Vedic rites and regarded by Nambudiris not as marriage but as concubinage) with women of the matrilineal castes, whose children belonged to the mother's caste and lineage by matrilineal descent. However, if in any generation the eldest Nambudiri son was was sterile, the second son

576 might marry a Nambudiri woman and beget
•611 children for his family. Nambudiri spinsters,
582 of whom there were many, remained in their
natal houses and were maintained by their kinsmen.
[595 The eldest son of a Nambudiri family
might however have several Nambudiri wives]
and also several Nayar concubines. Nambudiri
younger sons lived and ate in their natal households,
headship of which passed from the eldest
son down the line of his brothers and then dropped
to the eldest son in the filial generation. In this
way the Nambudiri family was prevented from
splitting into segments, and was enabled to
maintain its position on the ancestral estate over
597] many generations. If in any generation a family
had no son, succession was ensured by the
adoption of a daughter's husband or of a man of
a family related in the cognatic line.

613 In the royal lineages, since each lineage,
582 though exogamous, regarded itself as a separate
837 caste and admitted no peers, sexual unions were
entirely hypergamous. In Cochin and Walluvanad,
royal women had liaisons only with [37] Nambudiris
of the highest and wealthiest subcastes
within the kingdom; royal men, with women of
chiefly, village headmen or retainer Nayar lineages.
In the Calicut lineage, which came to
power later and took time to establish its ritual
rank, royal women till the 18th century had
liaisons either with Nambudiri men or with men
of the ancient royal lineages of tributary kingdoms,
who though through conquest were subordinate
to the upstart Zamorins, were still regarded
by them as of higher ritual rank. Later

835 rule of lineage exogamy. Even today, cases
582 occur very occasionally in which a man cohabits both with his wife and with their daughter by the marriage, or with his wife and her younger sister. Such affairs are viewed with disgust as evidence of extreme ill-breeding, but they do not merit excommunication or exclusion from public ceremonies. This appears to be because
[611] traditionally, only matrilineal kinsfolk are regarded as kin in the true sense of the word: incest prohibitions outside this range are a matter of propriety rather than of religious law.

582 No other unions outside the lineage and within the appropriate caste appear traditionally to have been prohibited. Relations with the father's sister (or rather with the sister of the mother's lover, since paternity was often uncertain) were disfavoured because of generation difference but even today they are not prohibited. Unions were definitely permissible between the Nambudiri son and the Nayar daughter of a Nambudiri eldest son (i.e., between paternal step-siblings); it is [82] not certain whether they were ever permitted between two Nayars known to be paternal step-siblings, but they are not permitted today. Marriage to the brother's daughter and the paternal parallel cousin are still permitted, though they are not preferential marriages between Nayars. Marriage is however preferential between a Nambudiri and his paternal parallel cousin of a matrilineal caste. This is particularly true of unions between aristocratic Nambudiris and royal women, since it perpetuates a bond between two groups both of which are small and highly

613 soldiers and Nayar women stationary in their
644 villages. It was left to the British, with their
631 introduction of a new highly specialized expanding economy with mechanized industry, to crack the system apart. This was essentially a small-scale feudal system - (the Zamorin's kingdom, at the height of its power, cannot have had more than 500,000 inhabitants) - and it depended on the existence of a fairly stable economy with the village as the basic social unit, self-sufficient for food. [101]

NOTES

162 (1) In 1931 the matrilineal castes numbered
[611] roughly one-fifth of the total population.

(2) Muslims in 1931 numbered about 15% of the total population, being concentrated chiefly in the south of Malabar District. The first converstions to Islam were probably carried out in the ninth century by Arab traders who visited the coast. This community, called the Mappillas, increased greatly after the fourteenth century, but particularly during the Muslim invasions from Mysore in the 1760's. The Muslims of North Malabar District follow matrilineal descent with matrilocal residence; those of other areas follow patriliny. *For a brief account of*
[113] North Malabar Muslim kinship see Gough, "Incest Prohibitions and Rules of Exogamy in three matrilineal groups of the Malabar Coast", in Int. Archives of Ethnography, June 1952.

The Christians of Kerala numbered about 20% of the population in 1931. The Syrian Christians,

Nayar: Central Kerala

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564 The Nayars, unlike the groups so far described, form only a part-society—a named category of castes within the social system of south-
[121] west India. An account of their kinship system therefore requires a sketch of the political and economic system in which they were embedded. It seems to have been the Nayars' role as a specialized occupational group within a complex society which accounted for the most unusual features of their kinship institutions.

101 The Nayars differ also from the other groups considered with re-
564 gard to their relatively high level of technological development. At
463 least from the first century A.D., Kerala's social structure was based
241 upon plough agriculture with irrigation, specialized crafts, and over-
433 seas trade (K. M. Panikkar, 1945: 38). Productivity was sufficiently
[439] high so that more than one-quarter of the population could be exempted from manual labor and set apart as specialist, literate groups engaged in religion, government, warfare, and wholesale trade. The
[162] Nayars, as the ruling and military castes, formed the core of this aristocracy and probably comprised between one-quarter and one-fifth of the total population.[1]

● 611 Partly as a result of direct legal changes brought about since the
178 British conquest of 1792, and, more deeply, as a result of the change
177 to an industrial fuel technology, the Nayar system of matrilineal groups has been gradually disintegrating over the past hundred years. Some of the traditional functions of these matrilineal units are being taken over by the elementary family and by the wider, personal, bilateral kindred of each individual. Other former functions of matrilineal groups have passed to such modern bureaucratic institutions as
121 government, army, law court, and school. Because this book is a com-
611 parative study of matrilineal systems, I shall concentrate on Nayar lineages and kinship in the "traditional" period before the British

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[161] [1] Buchanan estimated the population density of Central Kerala at 100 per square mile in 1800 (1807, II: 501). The density for Cochin State was 814 per square mile in 1931 (Census of India, Cochin State, 1931).

conquests; that is, from 1342, the date of the first useful Arabic ac- 121
count (Gibb, 1929) to the end of the eighteenth century. My sources 611
include English translations of the writings of Arab, Italian, Portu- [127]
guese, Dutch, and French visitors to Kerala, works by English travel-
ers, government servants, historians, and anthropologists, and a few
historical works by Indian scholars who make use of indigenous Mal-
ayalam and Sanskrit documents.

Modern changes in Nayar kinship are not evenly distributed 178
throughout the population. Some of the traditional institutions and 184
relationships persist, especially in villages most remote from the seats
of government and from modern market centers. Many other tradi- 124
tional usages are remembered by older people. Because of this, my
own field work in three villages of Kerala—between November, 1947 114
and July, 1949—was able to provide me with the organizational frame-
work into which to fit the literary material, and supplied me with
many details on the traditional system not hitherto published.[2] Some 127
information was also gleaned from genealogies, manuscript histories 124
of particular lineages, and translations of Malayalam documents re-
lating to land tenure, property transactions, and religious rites.

Modern changes in Nayar kinship comprise a large subject, which 114
I have already briefly treated elsewhere (Gough, 1952*a;* see also Rao, 178
1957: 74–142). A full account will appear in a forthcoming book.

Ecology

Kerala, or the Malabar Coast, lies in the extreme southwest of India 131
beside the Arabian Sea. The coastline is some 360 miles long, the area 133
about 14,908 square miles. It is divided from the rest of South India
by the Western Ghats, a mountain wall broken only in the center by
the Palghat Gap. From prehistoric to modern times, migrations took 167
place from the eastern plateau of peninsular India into the coastal re- 133
gion, but until the coming of modern transport the mountains pre-
vented continuous contacts between the people who became estab-
lished there and their neighbors to the east. On the other hand, its 177
position laid Kerala open to contacts by sea with many peoples, in-
cluding Jews and Arabs (from perhaps 800 B.C.), Egyptians and
Phoenicians (ca. fifth century B.C.), Romans (first century A.D.), Chi-

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[2] My field work in three villages of Central and North Kerala was made possible by the grant of a William Wyse Studentship from Trinity College, Cambridge, and of an Anthony Wilkin Studentship from the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. The preparation and writing of these chapters have been carried out with the aid of two grants from the Social Science Research Council, in 1954 and 1956. [122]

Caste and Territorial Divisions

THE HIGH CASTES

564 *The Nambudiri Brahmans* Throughout Kerala the Nambudiri Brahmans
were the highest Hindu caste and the ritual and scholastic leaders.
[162] Today they form one hundredth of the population (Censuses of
Madras, Cochin, and Travancore, 1931). Carriers of the Sanskrit language
[174] and of ancient Vedic culture, they are thought to have entered
Malabar from the eastern plateau sometime after the fall of the Chera
564 kingdom (Logan, 1951, I: 121, 243; Ayyar, 1938: 47). Most Nambudiris
were landlords of substance, but they included a number of
463 ranked occupational sub-castes of varying wealth. The greater landlords
were managers of large temples, promulgators of religious law,
legal advisers of the kings, priests of public sacrifices, or philosophers
and Vedic scholars. The lower sub-castes, whose members owned
smaller estates, included temple priests, physicians, and household
priests and professional cooks who officiated at ceremonies in the
Nayar castes.

564 The Nambudiris ranked ritually above the kings and were to some
extent above and outside the political systems of the kingdoms. Alone
of all the castes, they moved unmolested between enemy kingdoms.
They held ceremonies attended by their caste fellows from all parts
of Kerala and carried on their system of intra-caste administration
independently of the administration of justice within the kingdoms.
For the latter purpose they divided Kerala into *gramams* (caste areas)
(Logan, 1951, I: 120). Over the whole region a dignitary called the
Aravancheri Tamburakkal, who lived in the Calicut kingdom, was universally
acknowledged as the ritual and administrative leader of the
Nambudiris (Buchanan, 1807: 423–426; Ayyar, 1938: 23). He held the
right to install the kings of both Calicut and Cochin, even though
these rulers were traditionally at enmity. The field of social relations
of the Nambudiris was thus the whole of Kerala and they played a
● [611] role not dissimilar to that of the medieval Catholic church. Descent
among the Nambudiris was patrilineal.

564 *The High-Caste Nayars* Below the Nambudiri Brahmans in ritual
613 rank came the royal *matrilineages* of the several kingdoms. Those in
Central Kerala were Calicut, Walluvanad, Palghat, and Cochin. Although
635 of Nayar origin, each of these lineages considered itself superior
in ritual rank to the Nayar subjects within its kingdom. Between
kingdoms, royal lineages disputed for rank and would not intermarry.
Although exogamous, therefore, each royal lineage considered

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lage; and bow makers, each with about one to ten houses per village. 564
Tiyyars, astrologers, washermen, and barbers had double unilineal 162
descent: localized patrilineages with dispersed exogamous matrilineal [611] ●
clans. Artisans and bow makers had patrilineages only. [613]

The polluting castes worked for each other and for the higher castes. 564
Tiyyars held land on a sub-tenure from landlords and Nayar tenants. [427]
Astrologers and artisans gave services to the higher castes, to each other, and to the Tiyyars, who ranked above them. Barbers worked for all the higher polluting castes but not for the "good" castes, who employed the Nayar barber. Washermen laundered for all the higher polluting castes but not regularly for the "good" castes, who employed the Nayar washerman. However, the low-caste washerman's lineage owed services to the "good" castes at death, menstruation, and childbirth. Bow makers served Nayars and Tiyyars. Each of the polluting castes was endogamous and interdined only within the caste.

THE LOWER POLLUTING CASTES

On the outskirts of the village, in separate small hamlets, lived the very low castes of Parayas and Pulayas. Parayas were a small caste of basket and umbrella makers. Two or three households had a village right to serve all castes above them. Pulayas were until 1850 the agricultural serfs of Nayars, temple servants, and Brahmans (Buchanan, 1807: 370–372). As highly polluting castes, Pulayas and Parayas were theoretically forbidden to approach the high castes within a distance of sixty-four feet. They might not enter the "good" area of the village or walk on the main paths.

OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Muslims, called Mappillas, were concentrated in the Zamorin's king- 563
dom, where they followed patrilineal descent. In 1931 they formed [162]
about 15 per cent of Kerala's population. Their presence dates from
the ninth century, when Arab traders began to make converts, prob- [797]
ably mainly from the Tiyyars and the coastal caste of fishermen. From
the Arabs and from these converts there sprang a flourishing trad- [439]
ing community which increased greatly in the fourteenth century
(Logan, 1951, I: 192–197). The Zamorins derived a large measure of
their power from the Muslims through taxes and naval support (Ay-
yar, 1938: 54). Muslims lived mainly in the ports and at inland trad-
ing posts on the banks of rivers. They were partly outside the village [361]
ranking system, which had its basis in differential land rights, and
were theoretically outside the Hindu religious hierarchy. Nevertheless, [554]
Muslims were in some contexts accorded a rank ritually and socially
between that of Nayars and Tiyyars.

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564 According to the Census Report, 1891, they numbered 377,828 in Malabar. The figures found in this useful document offer an instance of the unreliability of casual observation. The author of "A Manual of Malabar Law" describes the peoples of Malabar to some extent, and in his Introduction says: "The Nâyars constitute the major portion of the Malabar population." One hears of Malabar as the land of the Nâyars, as if its inhabitants were all Nâyars. Certainly they may be said to form the most distinguishing feature of the district; but, when we seek in the spirit of accuracy, we find the surprising fact that they number but 14·2 per cent. of its population.

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564 The chief immediate interest attached to them lies in the fact of their being the best, that is the fullest, the most complete existing example of matriarchy, or, to be more strictly accurate, of inheritance through females. [171] This system, obtaining at one time amongst the Celts and other races of Europe, was probably universal in the sense that it existed at some period in the life history of every race of mankind, and is now to be found here and there in the world.

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171 That inheritance through females was once the rule in Southern India is fairly obvious. Amongst others the Maravars, who are, so far as we can surmise at present, aborigines in the sense that we know of no earlier inhabitants in the part of the peninsula occupied by them, to this day offer strong proof of this. I refer to the 600 genuine Maravars—the Kondayan Kottai Maravars of Tinnevelly—and not to the offshoots settled in Trichinopoly and elsewhere, who have almost entirely forsaken all the customs of their fathers.* Amongst the Maravars the girl on marriage joins the sept of her husband, but she retains her own sept name, and her children are of *her* sept; not of their father's. Marriage between persons of the same sept name is prohibited; and this is regulated solely through the mothers. The tribe is endogamous; but the septs within it are exogamous. Thus, a man or a girl cannot marry any one of the same sept, having the same sept name (which is inherited through their mother), and *must* marry some one within the tribe but of a different sept to his or her own—of his father's sept or any other. Though property

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* Most of the cigar makers of Trichinopoly are Maravars in origin. Their names —— ———Naidu,————Pillay, and so on are borrowed from people of higher castes.

devolves through the men, the degrees between which marriage is prohibitive are inherited through the women.* 000

But the circumstance that inheritance through women was once, perhaps, the rule in Southern India cannot be accepted as of itself proof that the Nâyars are identical with the Dravidians, as the people of Southern India are commonly called. It is not yet time to say whether they are or are not. To the ordinary visitor their outward appearance, customs, habitations, mode of life generally, are very different from what he sees in the Telugu or Tamil countries; for Malabar, "the west coast," is as unlike the rest of the Presidency as Burma. The only other district of the Madras Presidency which resembles Malabar, is Ganjám, more particularly the northern part of it, where the people are almost entirely Aryan. The resemblance between these, the Uriyas of Gumsoor and thereabouts, a fine fighting stock, and the Nâyars of Malabar is very striking. It is not, perhaps, a mere coincidence that in these two furthest remote corners of the Presidency alone, the people at large are to be seen wearing umbrella hats to protect them from the sun. 101 174 [611] [171]

The Nâyars are divided into clans, (we will call them clans for want of a better term), many of which intermingle through marriage, but some of them are endogamous. The precise number of these clans cannot be given, as it is disputed whether certain of them have a right to belong to the cognate Nâyar body. The names of the clans which have come directly under my measuring instruments are these :— 564

Kiriyattil.
Sûdra.
Kurup.
Nambiyâr.
Úrâli.
Nalliôden.
Viyyûr.
Akattu Chârna.
Purattu Chârna.
Vattakkâd.
Vangilôth.

Kitâvu.
Pallichan.
Muppathinâyiran.
Vlyâpâri or Râvâri.
Attikkurissi.
Mânavallan.
Vengôlan.
Adungâdi.
Adiôdi.
Âmayengolam.

This list is not in order of priority.

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* An example of this custom existing in another land may be quoted here from a modern book—'The Caroline Islands,' by F. W. Christian, 1899: "Descent is traced through the mother—a custom tolerably common amongst the Oceanic races in general. Members of the same tipu or clan cannot marry." (Page 74.)

595 it certainly did not long ago. Polyandry exists amongst other castes, as we shall see by and by.

58 We must now leave the subject of marriage, which,
simple though it is, is like most simple things extremely
● 611 difficult to describe. The marital relation of the Nâyar
is a very natural and simple affair; yet it is the *point d'appuis* of that system of inheritance through women which was once much more common than it is now.

604 Let us hope it will remain unchanged, and that the Nâyar will be able to say always (in his own tongue), with more regard for concrete truth than poetic insight "Das ewig' weibliche ziet uns hinan."

BIRTH: ANTE-NATAL AND AFTER CEREMONIES.

843 The following very interesting note on the ceremonies connected with birth, those preceding it as well as those following it, has been very kindly given by Mr. U. Balakrishnan Nâyar; so I quote his own words:—

"A Nâyar woman has to observe certain ceremonies
during pregnancy. First, during and after the seventh
[564] month of pregnancy, she (at least, among the well-to-do
[184] class) bathes, and worships in the temple, every morning;
and eats before her morning meal, a small quantity of butter over which holy *mantrams* have been said by the temple priest or by Nambûtiris. This is generally done till delivery.

843 "*Puli-kuti.*—Another and even more important cere-
mony during pregnancy is the *puli-kuti* (lit., drinking
613 tamarind juice). This is an indispensable ceremony, per-
formed by the rich and poor alike, on a particular day in
[787] the ninth month. The day, nay, even the very hour is
fixed by the local astrologer. The ceremony begins by
[824] the planting of a twig of the *ampasham* tree, on the morn-
ing of the day of the ceremony, in the principal courtyard *(natu-muttom)* of the *Taravâd*. At the appointed hour or *muhurtam*, the pregnant woman, after having bathed and properly attired, is conducted to a particular portion of the house (*vatakini* or northern wing), where she is seated, facing eastwards. The *Ammâyi* or 'uncle's wife,' whose presence on the occasion is essential, goes to the courtyard and plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the brother, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is necessary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his right-hand ring finger. Holding a

In the south-east of Malabar, in the neighbourhood of 796
Palghat, the Ônam games are of a rougher character, the 526
tenants of certain jenmis (landlords) turning out each 184
under their own leader, and engaging in sham fights in which there is much rough play. Here, too, is to be seen a kind of boxing which would seem to be a relic of the days of the Roman pugiles using the cestus in combat. The position taken up by the combatants is much the
same as that of the pugiles. The Romans were familiar [175]
with Malabar from about 30 B.C. to the decline of their
power. We may safely assume that the "3,000 lbs. of [263]
pepper" which Alarie demanded as part of the ransom
of Rome when he besieged the city in the fifth century, [648]
came from Malabar.*

Before ending this very incomplete account of customs 173
of the Nâyars, mention must be made of two more of 635
these, both odd. Ever since Châraman Perumal departed from the west coast of India in A.D. 825, setting sail for Arabia and Mecca, having divided up his kingdom,
His Highness the Maharajah of Travancore when ascending his throne says: "I ascend the musnud, and will [788]
rule until my uncle returns." The "uncle" is Chârama Perumal, the last sovereign of the west coast, who, having embraced the Muhammadan religion which was brought to his shores by Arab traders, proceeded to carry out a wild idea—so goes the legend—of receiving instruction from the Prophet himself! He never returned. To one princeling was given the territory now known as Travancore, and his surviving successor (through the female line of course) is the present
Maharajah of Travancore. To another he gave Cochin, [611] ●
the ruler of which State also inherits through the female line. To the ancestor of the Zamorin of Calicut the Perumal gave no territory, as to the others, but he gave him his sword (it is still in existence) with the
advice "to die and kill and annex." That he annexed 635
is quite clear, as he was the sovereign not only of Calicut but of the country round about when modern
Europeans first visited the west coast of India. Like the
Maharajah of Travancore, the Zamorin repeats the [788]
formula that he rules until his uncle returns, but in his case it forms part of an elaborate and costly ceremony. The fort, which was the official residence of the Zamorin,

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* See Madras Government Museum Catalogue No. 2, Roman Coins, by Mr. Edgar Thurston, Superintendent of the Museum.

635 was in Calicut,[*] and it has always been necessary for the new Zamorin to come to this fort in Calicut in a very formal manner. The residences, the kôvilagams of the various branches of the family, lie far to the eastward. The heir to the Zamorinship must make his formal entry into Calicut, for until he does so he is not, strictly speaking, the Zamorin. There is much obscurity as to details of the ceremonial, and I have not been able to note these satisfactorily, so will state merely so much as is undoubtedly correct. The new Zamorin comes to the bank of the Kallai river adjoining Calicut. There he is asked some questions, and he crosses this river in a *boat*—not over the bridge. Arrived on the Calicut side he must partake of some betel-leaf from a Mâppila man dressed as a (Mâppila) woman, or, as some say, from a Mâppila woman[†] and he says that he assumes the title of Zamorin and rules until his uncle returns. The betel-leaf, received from a (Muhammadan) Mâppila, which he
[783] chews, defiles him. He has lost his status in the caste, and he is supposed to be henceforth celibate. It would seem that this old world ceremony is likely to follow the track along which so much of what is interesting in India is disappearing. The late Zamorin never went through it, and he was therefore never, properly speaking,
[613] the Zamorin. He held the title perfunctorily, and he was the kârnavan of the immense property of the family; but he could not go "in procession" as Zamorin.[‡] There are three unpleasant concomitants to the ceremony.
[834] It costs much money. It involves degradation in caste. It compels chastity.

182 The other odd custom is not one affecting merely an
562 individual and a few with him, but it is a sexual one, and
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[*] There is now no sign of it, though the site is known.

[†] Those who say that a woman gives the betel-leaf say, very reasonably, that a Mâppila man would never for any consideration or purpose wear a woman's garb. But, on the other hand, it is said the person *is* and must be a man, and that he dresses for this occasion only, as a woman.

[‡] The Zamorin was in Calicut but once since he became Zamorin on the occasion of his visit to His Excellency the Governor of Madras in 1896, and then infringed custom by coming to Calicut without previously undergoing the ceremony. Owing to a death in the family he was under pollution and therefore unable to undertake the ceremony at that time, so he came by train. These old-fashioned customs, written or unwritten, take no count of trains. For example, the modern pilgrims from Northern India find the train very convenient when they wish to visit Rameshvaram. The penance of a life is reduced to a few days in a train. What would the old sages say! So the Zamorin came by train. But he could not go "in procession" along the road *as Zamorin*, and was obliged to make his visit as an ordinary grandee.

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therefore one belonging to the community at large—in South Malabar, at any rate. The system of inheritance through females as it obtains amongst the Nâyars, relieves the woman from that undignified position which she occupies throughout the civilized world as the personal chattel of her husband. It gives her a relative superiority, and she carries this elsewhere. Coitus haud ita fit ut supina mulier viro morem gerat, immo etiam supino viro insidens illa, facie in eum conversâ genibusgue hic atqus illic dispositis negotium illud perficere solet. Hanc veneris figuram feminis ineundiorem, atque idcirco ab iis vindicatam esse perhibent periti. The well-known *jape* by which Iago hoped to arouse Brabantio into activity would be altogether inapplicable here. 562 182

Two more excerpts from Mr. Gopal Panniker's little book will be made, with his permission, descriptive of the other two most important national or popular festivals of Malabar. 127 796

"THE VISHU FESTIVAL.

"Vishu, like the Onam and the Thiruvathira Festivals, is a remarkable event amongst us. Its duration is limited to one day. The 1st of Mêtam (some day in April) is the unchangeable day on which it falls. It is practically the Astronomical New Year's Day.* This was one of the periods when in olden days the subjects of ruling princes or authorities in Malabar under whom their lots were cast, were expected to bring their New Year's offerings to such princes. Failure to comply with the said customary and time-conscerated demands was visited with royal displeasure resulting in manifold varieties of oppression. The British Government finding this was a great burden *pressing rather heavily upon the people*, obtained as far back as 1790, a binding promise from those Native Princes that such exactions of presents from the people should be discontinued thereafter. Consequently it is now shorn of much of its ancient sanctity and splendour. But suggestive survivals of the same are still to be found in the presents (explained further on) which tenants and dependants bring to leading families on the day previous to the Vishu. 796 [651] [648] [182] [431]

"Being thus the commencement of a New Year, native superstition surrounds it with a peculiar solemn importance. It is believed that a man's whole prosperity in life depends upon [777]

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* See Madras Museum Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 57 and 58. [113]

Female Initiation Rites on the Malabar Coast

Curl Bequest Prize Essay, 1953[*]

E. KATHLEEN GOUGH

INTRODUCTION 588

UNTIL TWENTY YEARS AGO, the *tālikettukalyānam* (*tāli*-tying marriage) was performed by almost 564
all the castes of Malabar below Brahmans and above the lowest 'exterior' castes.[1] I confine 121
this discussion to four groups with different kinship systems: the matrilineal, uxorilocal
Nayars of South Malabar District and Cochin; the matrilineal, virilocal Nayars of North 611
Malabar District; the matrilineal, virilocal Tiyyars of North Malabar District; and the 591
double unilineal, patrilocal Tiyyars of South Malabar and Cochin.[2]

This girls' initiation ceremony was apparently first described in 1510 by Duarte Barbosa, 121
a Portuguese traveller. Since that date, there have been descriptions of the ceremony by other
Portuguese, Dutch, and East India Company writers, and in the past sixty years much 588
controversy between Indian and British anthropologists about its origin and meaning. Yet
no one, as far as I know, has recognized its significance in terms of the total kinship systems of [175]
the castes who performed it.[3] My first task has therefore been to describe the *tāli*-rite in each
caste and to discuss its social function in the kinship system; I do so in Parts I to IV of the essay.
In these, I have used the reports of previous writers which, since the rite died out about [127]
twenty years ago, are in many cases better than those I collected from informants. At the
same time, for a full interpretation of the rite, I found it necessary to incorporate some of my
own general field data on Nayar and Tiyyar kinship, collected in 1947-9. My field work was [114]
carried out in a South Malabar village (Walluvanād subdivision) for six months, in a Cochin
village for eight months, and in a North Malabar village (Kottayam subdivision) for eight
months.[4]

Having analyzed, as far as I was able, the social function of the ceremony, I found that, as perhaps with all rites, many of its features were not explicable in terms of social function and of conscious motivations. While it was possible to show, in a general way, how in each case the ceremony was in harmony with the pattern of kinship relations in these groups, it was not possible to explain sociologically why certain persons should take part in the rites, rather than other persons, why certain material objects should be used, and indeed, why it should be necessary to perform this ceremony at all. It seemed to me that the answer to these problems lay in unconscious motivations common to the members of these castes, and could

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[*] [Two Curl Bequest Prizes were awarded for the year 1953, one to the writer of the present essay and the other to Mr H. N. C. Stevenson, O.B.E., for his essay 'Status Evaluation in the Hindu Caste System', which appeared in the last volume of the JOURNAL. – ED.]

[1] For a brief analysis of modern changes in Nayar kinship see Gough (1952). For a fuller analysis of modern changes in the Tiyyar systems see Aiyappan (1944).

[2] The Tiyyars are called Iravas or Chovans in some parts of South Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore. For convenience, [101]
I use 'Tiyyars' throughout.

[3] Dr Aiyappan (1942; 1944, pp. 159-62) has made the most comprehensive study of Malabar *tāli*-rites. He concludes [114]
that in most of the castes the *tāli*-rite is 'nothing more than an initiatory rite, preliminary to attaining marriageable status'.
While I agree with him, I think that this conclusion begs the question and does not explain the function or motivations
of the rite.

[4] My field work was made possible by the grant of a William Wyse Studentship from Trinity College, Cambridge, and [122]
of an Anthony Wilkin Studentship from the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge.

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why a man's affection for his own son is neither so intense nor so permanent as his 586
affection for his sister's son. 593

Also, in matrilineal communities family tradition descends only through the 613
sister's progeny. As the Nāyars formed a fighting aristocracy before the British
conquest, they had naturally acquired family tradition, mottoes and arms, which 611
descend of right only in the female line. Hence also a man looks to the training 604
of his sister's sons to keep up his family tradition. All these contribute to an extraordinary, and at first sight inexplicable, tenderness towards the children of one's sister.

Relationship.[1]—Among the Nāyars the classificatory system of relationship is 601
prevalent. When the ties of the family extend not only to one's immediate relations
but to all who trace descent from the same ancestress in the female line, it is but [613]
natural that the terms of close relationship are used to all who belong to the family. As a matter of fact, the distinction between own brothers and collateral brothers does not exist. All the persons of your own generation older than you are called brothers, and equal respect is shown to them. They are called by such terms as big brother, small brother, etc., *only when they are older than you.* Those who are younger are always called by their names.

All women of your mother's generation are called mothers; those older than your mother are called *Peramma* or *Valiamma*, which means nominal mother or bigger mother, and those younger are called *Kochamma*, little mothers. But unlike among brothers, the distinction between one's mother and other females of the same generation is always maintained. Though respect is paid to all of them alike, own mother is always spoken of as mother, without qualification, and she alone has complete right to command you. Mother's own sisters are also different from those who are only collateral cousins to her. Mother's own brother and all of his generation are called *Ammava* (literally mother's brother). Here also the distinction between own *Ammavas* and collateral *ammavas* was very slight in Nāyar society till nearly thirty years ago. Now, however, one looks more on one's own *Ammava* as different from others, which is obviously due to the influence of the authority of direct relationship inculcated through the new system of education.[2]

The mother-in-law has no special name. This is, of course, due to the universal 606
prevalence of first cross-cousin marriage. The mother-in-law is generally addressed 601

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[1] Spencer and Gillen (*Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 56) try to prove that the classi-
ficatory terminology to express relationship shows the existence in some earlier time of group [114]
marriages. Perhaps it does so when such relationship terms are in use in a patrilineal community. On the other hand, in a matrilineal community such terms have nothing to do with the system of marriage, but only with relationship counted on the mother's side.

[2] Note specially: though all the women of the mother's generation stand in equal relationship, it is only the actual parent that is entitled to be called mother without any qualification to it. All the others are spoken of in comparative terms, as big mother, *i.e.*, elder mother, small mother, *i.e.*, younger mother.

291 184 richer classes go in for Benares silk. This is wound round the loins and extends to the feet. The upper part of the body is seldom covered by the commoner folk, though most of them carry a second piece of cloth with them. Among the titled classes of the Nāyars it is customary to put on a long piece of laced muslin on the upper part of their body.

Mostly the Nāyars go barefoot, though expensive and elaborately-made sandals are used by the richer classes.

824 302 *Scents, Flowers, etc.*—The Nāyars use a lot of scented things. Sandal-wood paste, which has a beautiful aroma, is generally used on various parts of the body. Musk is also used, generally by ladies. Jasmine is the favourite flower. It is worn in clusters by women in their hair. It is very difficult to find an old Nāyar house which has not got a jasmine plant in its garden. Its scent is delightful, and when strung together as a garland it makes the most delightful, as well as the most welcome, present to a lady. Jasmine is also strewn in the bridal bed.

415 412 326 *Household Utensils.*—Household utensils, plates, pots, etc., are mostly made of bronze. Very few Nāyar families have got what is spoken of as household silver. The material they use is generally made with great taste, but the praise for this does not belong to them. The workers in bronze are hereditary craftsmen. Their life is devoted to designing and making these things, and naturally they have acquired great efficiency in it. The only praise that the Nāyars deserve for using them lies in the fact that, in spite of a strong temptation to go in for aluminium ware, which is much cheaper, they persist in using the costly, but better made and more artistic bronze things.

121 178 What is the future of this people? Will they become patrilineal and merge into the vast ocean of Hindu population, or will they remain matrilineal, while adjusting their social relationships and economic organisations to suit the changing conditions of life in India? Will they break up their *Tharawad* (the joint family) and abandon the primitive system of classificatory relationship? These are questions difficult to answer, but some new tendencies may here be noticed.

178 611 One thing I must say to start with. There is no chance of the system of matriliny undergoing any fundamental change in Malabar. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, the economic interest is too large to submit to any change in the order of things dictated by purely theoretical reasons. Even if we could establish that the patrilineal system of life is superior to the matrilineal, the change from the latter to the former would not take place in Malabar, because it would mean a social revolution of some magnitude. Secondly, as long as there is the Brahmin marriage system it is not only the Nāyars that are interested in its upkeep, but also the Nampudiris.

178 564 Another reason is this. There is in Malabar what may be called a strong caste war. There is first of all the Nampudiri class, mostly landlords with great social and religious influence. Their rivalry is not of great importance. There are, then, the Nāyars. Thirdly, we have the Syrian Christians, who are an extremely intelli-

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gent, persevering, and prosperous community. Fourthly, there are the foreign 564
Brahmins, who are chiefly usurers, making money by lending at a fabulous high rate of interest and buying up property. Now, the *Tharawad* (or the joint undivided family) system gives the Nāyars a great advantage. Their capital is strategically 178
massed, so to say, and while the property of a family is joined together its credit is 613
much more than it would be if it were divided between the various members. Intel- 434
ligent Nāyars see the advantage of this position, and are loth to break up what is most certainly an effective economic organisation.

The tendencies of change that are visible are mainly the following : 178

There is, first of all, a distinct process of change from the *matrilocal* to the *patrilocal* system. 591 This is at present confined to a few of the English-educated families. The officials and those in learned professions have their wives and children staying with them, and this has most certainly set up a new current of opinion. The tendency among these people has been to change the matrilocal matriliny into patrilocal. The older families still look with disapproval on this, and it has not progressed very much, except among a few ultra-moderns. Even in orthodox families the women were allowed for a few months every year to go and stay with their husband's people. Now, by the Nāyar Regulation Act (1912) of Travancore, the husband is given the right to demand that his wife should come and stay with him. Of course, it is open to the *Karnavan* to prohibit this, but in such a case the husband can divorce his wife immediately. Therefore we may safely predict a definite change to a patrilocal system among the English-educated classes of Nāyars.

But whether this would contribute towards a change from matrilineal to 178
patrilineal system is a question more difficult to answer. 611 On the whole I am inclined to answer it in the negative. But for the economic competition of other communities, the Nāyars would certainly have partitioned their estates and started on a patrilineal existence. But now it is too late. The economic interest involved is so vast, the number of people to be affected by it so great, the change in itself so revolutionary, that it is, for a long time at least, beyond the scope of either legislative or administrative action. It would, indeed, be very interesting to watch the line of evolution which such a community, placed as it is between the close and powerful oligarchy of the Nampudiri Brahmins, and the no less powerful and at present unquestionably more aggressive Syrian Christians, would take. The next quarter of a century will probably solve the problem. What the solution will be it is impossible for us to say ; that it will not for a long long time, at least, be real patriliny, I can prophesy ; the rest time alone can answer.

APPENDIX.

Note No. 1.—*The Origin of the word* " *Nāyars.*" 101

There are many reasons to believe that the term Nāyar is a corrupted form of the word *Nagar* or " serpent-men." The generally accepted derivation of the word

CHAPTER III.

THE SUDRAS OF COCHIN.

A. THE HIGH CASTE SUDRAS (NAYARS)

(Continued).

592 613 [611] Inheritance. The Nayars follow the ***marumakkatháyam*** law of succession, *i. e.*, the law which regulates succession through the female line. The senior male member called the *kâranavan* is entitled to the full possession of the property, and is absolute in its management. The junior members, on the other hand, have a claim to residence and maintenance in the family house. They cannot call for an account except as an incident to a prayer for the removal of the manager for gross misconduct, nor claim any specific share of the income, nor even require that the maintenance provided for them should be in proportion to the income of the *tarawád.* An absolute discretion in this direction is vested in the manager who is the legal guardian of every member of the family.[1] He is not accountable to any member in the *tarawád* in respect of its income, nor can a suit be maintained for an account of the *tarawád* property in the absence of fraud on his part. He is under no obligation to support any member of his *tarawád* by his own labour or from his self-acquisitions. The only restraint on him in the management is, that he cannot alienate [425] the lands of the family except with the consent of all the other members and without proper necessity.[2] If a family has so far increased in the number of its members that they cannot conveniently live under the same roof any longer, it divides itself with the consent of the senior member into *távazhis* to each of which is assigned a portion of the property for maintenance, and such *távazhis* may reside in separate houses or farm-houses belonging to the family and appropriating from the lands newly assigned to them an income sufficient to maintain themselves. In the partition of

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[1] Vide Mayne's Hindu Law, sec. 268,

[2] I. L. R. II, Mad. 328.

a Nayar *tarawád*, all the members are equally entitled to a 592
share. The self-acquisitions of each member of a *tarawád* 613
are at his absolute disposal during his life-time, but this right [421]
lapses to the *tarawád* on his death.[1] In families where the *káranavans* look after the welfare of each individual member and the savings of the junior members go to increase the wealth
of the family, there is peace and prosperity. Such families 592
are rarely found in these days. Times are changed, as also 613
the conditions of the community, and the old and large 182
families are disappearing through mismanagement. In the majority of cases, when the senior member takes up the management, he is too old and unfit to govern a score of men and women younger than himself and bound to him by no natural tie of affection. He often becomes a mere puppet in the hands of an unscrupulous but stronger member while the other members of the *tarawád* suffer from the injustice consequent under such circumstances. In some cases he misappropriates the family property and alienates it in favour of his wife and children, and the gross acts of spoliation carried on by *káranavan* have reduced some of the respectable families in Malabar and elsewhere to poverty and misery. It is also said, that the junior members are disobedient and do not work for the common good and this state of things is also common everywhere. Another cause for the downfall of the ancient family system is the growing disinclination among its junior members to work for the common good of the *tarawád* and their dislike to the rule of the *káranavan*.[2]

The Nayars who follow this *marumakkathayam* law of [611]
inheritance include nearly all the aristocracy of the country, [556]
but the notion that every *tarawád* has an estate sufficient to feed an indefinite number of souls is unfounded and erroneous. Most of the families are poor, and the *káranavans* are mere tenant farmers cultivating a few acres of land on a precarious tenure, and a law which requires such a man, from the produce of his farm, to feed and provide for all the descendants of his female relatives from the time of their birth to their death, whether they work or not, is one of those laws which continue to exist in name but are actually disregarded in practice.[3]

Tribal organisations.

In ancient times the rulers of Cochin held supreme sway 631
in the territories which belonged to them. 643
There were no regular councils, nor assemblies;

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[1] II, Mad. H. C. R. 162.

[2] and [3]. Malabar Marriage Commission Report, pages 49-51.

613 19th century. In this connection, I was much interested in studying court records
182 and various documents, including *the Nayar Regulation II, 1925, Travancore*, and
[127] *the Malabar Marumakkathayam Act of 1933*, which legally marked the end of
the functional Nayar *tarwad* system. Actual partition of an individual *tarwad*
[656] occured earlier, or later, than these acts.[1] However the present discussion is
[121] concerned mainly with the internal situation of the *tarwad* as it disintegrated, the
discussion of external factors and causes of the disintegration of the *tarwad* are
omitted.

The process of the disintegration of the *tarwad* can be summarized in terms of the essential elements which constitute the functional body of a *tarwad:*

A. members of a matrilinial lineage exclusively
B. co-residential (domestic) unit
C. property owning unit
D. headed by the *karanavan*
E. Ceremonial unit.

613 In the disintegration of the *tarwad*, the group loses these elements gradually.
182 The element which is lost first seems to be *B*. A population which exceeds the
591 limit of the accomodation of a *tarwad* building, results in residential separation
of small segments of a matrilineal group who have the same grandmother, or grand-grandmother, called *tawari*. Such a group, residing in a separate household, in the course of time tends to develop as a temporal economic unit. Though the ancestral property is held in common by all members of the *tarwad* together, the residential sub-group would become a semi-independent productive and consumption unit: the income would not be pooled into the *tarwad* but consumed by the members of each group. Hence the function of the *karanavan* as the head of the *tarwad*, the property group, becomes incomplete.

613 At the same time, when the residential unit becomes smaller, it would give
182 chances for the inclusion of spouses and the element A would be shaken. The
[611] cohabitation of wife and husband leads to the inclusion of nonmatrilineal
members in a matrilineal residential group. These factors bring on economic and psychological confusion in the duties and obligations of a *tarwad* member. Thus, by the destruction of elements *A*, *B*, and *C*, the status of the *karanavan*
[578] becomes ambiguous. There occur various disputes between the *karanavan* and
other members on the rights of the *tarwad* property.

[434] This situation is enhanced by the fact that an increase of members who have
an independent income without depending on the *tarwad* property, form an
[594] independent household with his wife and children. This situation makes it
difficult to maintain the *tarwad* as a property unit, and also infringes the function of the *karanavan*. In fact the actual contribution of the father who was not the legal guardian of his children is significant in the failure of the role of the *karanavan* for the matrilineal members. Thus at last a *tarwad* has no alternative

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[113] [1] A report of my study on these legal documents, including materials given in this paper, was published in Japanese: "On the disintegration of the Nayar *tarwad*," *Memoirs of the Institute for Oriental Culture*, University of Tokyo, Vol. 14, pp. 1–131, 1958.

173 sage of Malabar, gave it to the priestly caste of Brahmins in perpetual holding.

These Brahmins now declared themselves satisfied and moved to take it over, but were at first frightened away by the aboriginal *Naga* (serpent) worshippers. Other Brahmins were then brought in from the north and instructed by Parasu Raman to propitiate the serpents by installing them as their household gods. He also organized the priestly settlers into sixty
● [611] four villages (*gramams*) and directed them to adopt succession through the mother (*marumakkathayam*), which last injunction they disobeyed, with the single exception of Payyanur in Chirakkal, where Brahmins observe matrilineal descent to this day. He then brought in Sudras (Nayars) from the country east of the Ghats (that is from the Tamil country) and entrusted them with the protection of the Brahmins; they were organized into *taras* and to them were given the duties of supervising, executing and issuing orders, so that rights in Kerala should not be curtailed or suffered to fall into disuse.

173 175 From this nebulous, mythical past, history later slowly emerges. Already, one thousand years B.C., Solomon is reputed to have traded with the south-west coast of India. Commercial contacts with the Near East did actually exist in this part of the sub-continent much earlier than anywhere else in India, the sea acting as a medium of communication. With the discovery of the south-west trade winds by Hippalus in the 1st century A.D., the Romans carried on the profitable relation, and they are reputed to have even had a settlement at Cranganore in Travancore. In 52 A.D., St Thomas landed there, according to local tradition, and converted some Brahmin families to Christianity, thus laying the foundation of the present-day Malabar Christian communities. During the following decades, as a result of the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem by the Emperor Titus in 70 A.D., the first Jews are reputed to have arrived in Kerala to settle at Mattancheri in Cochin.

175 In the 3rd century A.D., the Brahmins called in a king to rule them, and the Perumal dynasty started with Keya Perumal, who came from Keyapuram, east of the Ghats. Trade with other parts of the world continued during this period, the Arabs arriving from the Hadramaut and the Persian Gulf in the 9th century. The Chinese, however, are said by Marco Polo to have been in full control of the Malabar marts when that great traveller visited the area in the 13th century. Shortly afterwards, the last of the Perumals, Cheruman Perumal, was converted to Islam and departed to Mecca never to return.

Before leaving, Cheruman Perumal put his kingdom in order, it is

Respect towards a superior, towards a god, towards a respected Par-
ent, or towards the higher casteman, was always shown in Kerala by not 105
wearing anything in his presence above the waist, be one man or woman. 564
Basically, this has changed but little, the Nambudri Brahmin always 576
praying in his private temple with only a loin cloth on, the modern Tiya 291
factory girl now removing the blouse which she has taken to wearing before some important personage of her kin group, so that her breasts are exposed. What is a less frequent sight nowadays is Nayar, Tiya or Kammalan women in the streets and on the roads without some covering over the upper parts of their bodies. Lower caste people, however, Cherumas, Pulayas and aboriginals, being less affected by progress, are still to be seen on the highways, their shapely bodies exposed from the waist upwards.

A striking phenomenon in Kerala is the coexistence, even today, of 104
the two radically opposed systems of *marumakkathayam* (matriliny) and 105
of *makkathayam* (patriliny). In the first, children are born into their 564
mother's caste, while in the other they are born into their father's caste. 614
Inheritance is through the mother's brother in the first instance, and [611]
through the father in the second. The matrilineal people are grouped in [428]
matrilineal clans called *tarawads*, of which the senior male member, the *karanavan*, is the recognized head; the patrilineal people have patrilineal clans called by the same name, *tarawad*, also with the senior male as the *karanavan*, but at the same time, they observe descent through the mother, and all are members of matrilineal descent groups known as
illams or *kiriyams*. While castes and, strictly speaking, subcastes are in [613]
principle endogamous, clans and lineages are definitely exogamous, mar- [588]
riage being matrilocal in the case of matrilineal people and patrilocal in [591]
the case of patrilineal people.[1]

Of the high castes, only the Nambudri Brahmins are *makkathayam*. [611]
They have patrilineal *gothras* or lineages which are exogamous, and [613]
patrilineal clans like *tarawads* which they, however, call *illams*. In olden [582]
days, only the eldest son could contract a regular marriage within his
caste, marriage being polygamous and patrilocal. The younger sons 105
were either expected to live as *brahmacharyas* (bachelor religious devo- 564
tees) or could cohabit with Nayar women in a form of union known as [588]
sambandham to which we shall revert in a moment. They were main- [463]
tained by their own efforts (they generally became cooks) and by a [582]
meagre allowance from the family *illam*. This has now been changed by [428]

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[1] I continue to make use of the terms *matrilocal* and *patrilocal* here, rather than *uxorilocal* and *virilocal* as still being perfectly adequate as they were for Ceylon previously.

105 the Nambudri Act of 1933, the provisions of which are that younger
564 Nambudris may marry women of their own caste and that the *illam*
581 property can be divided, if they so wish, and inherited by these younger
428 sons.

105 Others who observe *makkathayam* in Kerala are the south Malabar
564 and north Cochin Thandans, the Kammalans and their associated fellow
●611 artisans and craftsmen, all the agrarian serfs and the aboriginals, the
south Malabar Moslem Moplas, the Christians and the Jews.

Marumakkathayam, on the other hand, is practised by Kshattriyas,
Samantans, Ambalavasis, Nayars, north Malabar Tiyas, south Travan-
core Iruvas and north Malabar as well as Laccadive Moplas. In the
[428] case of the Mohammedans, a distinction should be made in matters of
inheritance, family property (that is of the *tarawad*) being handed on
through the female line alone, while self-acquisitions of the father are
[192] passed on directly to his male heirs. A visit to the Makhdun Tangal of
[115] Ponani, the senior Islamic religious authority in Kerala, which I made
on the 24th of November, 1949, allowed me to confirm this. Originally
from the Hedjaz, Sayed Mohammed Ben Mustafa Haidaros told me that
this was an adaptation of Koranic law to the customs of the country and
had been introduced many years back with the coming of his ancestors
to the south-west coast of India.

Marriage in Kerala is an arranged affair, parents or a close relative
105 such as the maternal uncle, choosing a suitable partner for the child
564 after the age of puberty. Once the two families involved have agreed
[58] as to what shall be paid in bride price and in dowry, the wedding is
celebrated publicly with religious rites and with an appropriate display
of festive spending. This is the general rule insofar as marriage within
[588] the caste is concerned. Intercaste relations are, however, far from rare,
and their existence has been regularized and institutionalized in a form
of sexual union, mentioned above, and known as *sambandham*.

105 By this arrangement, which appears to conform to a general principle
564 of hypergamy in Kerala, men of a higher caste are permitted to consort
588 with women of a lower one, without incurring any of the obligations to-
wards wife and children which they would have if they had been regu-
larly wed. Greatly facilitating this is the fact that *sambandham* unions
[428] usually take place with women of those people who follow *marumakka-
thayam*, for in this way, the offspring which they may have will belong
to their caste and are cared for by and inherit from the maternal uncle.

Sambandham used to be the usual way in which younger Nambudri
sons enjoyed the privilege of taking Nayar women to themselves and

ponderable evil, the reputation of which is great outside its boundaries.

5. POLYANDRY IN KERALA

During my stay in Kerala, I found that the following castes practise 595
polyandry in the state: Nayars, Thandans, and Tiyas (Thiyyas) of north 564
Cochin, Kammalans such as Tathans (goldsmiths), Karuwans, or 463
Perinkollam (blacksmiths), Asaris (carpenters) and Puri-asaris (laterite-cutters), Musaris (bell-metal smiths of braziers); also the allied castes to these of Kolla-kurups (shampooers, masseurs, and leather-shield makers) and Vil-kurups(bow-makers), Tol-kollans (leather workers), Kanisans (astrologers), Mannans (washermen and barbers), Panans (exorcists and umbrella-makers), Pulluvans (herbalists and *nag* worship songsters). All [611]
follow *makkathayam* except the Nayars, who are *marumakkathayam* from one end of Kerala to the other.

Today, Nayars in Kerala are said, as we have seen (p. 92), to have 595
ceased the practice of polyandry. Not only do they say so themselves, 177
but other castes are emphatic on this point as well. Since, with the dis- [701]
appearance of the petty chieftains, Nayar militias no longer exist, the customs that were closely linked to these organizations have also faded away. The Mysore invasions perhaps had something to do with it, too, [705]
for Tipu Sultan was grimly determined to eradicate the Nayar armies and made this his principal objective. In 1788, before invading Malabar, in a proclamation which was intended, among other things, to be a warning to the people, he said: ". . . and since it is the practice with you for one woman to associate with ten men, and you leave your mothers and sisters unconstrained in their obscene practices, and are thence all born in adultery; and are more shameless in your connections than the beasts in the fields: I hereby require you to forsake these sinful practices and to be like the rest of mankind; and if you are disobedient to these commands, I have made repeated vows to honour the whole of you with Islam." (quoted by C. A. Innes, I.C.S. in *Malabar and Anjengo*, Madras District Gazeteers, p. 72). Many of the Moplas today, especially inland, [799]
are descendants of Nayars whom Tipu thus did "honour with Islam". They were forcibly circumcized and regaled with beef. Many, however, [564]
reconverted themselves later, but lost caste in the process and were never considered the same again.

In spite of it being said that Nayars are no longer polyandrous in 595
Kerala, I was able to find, as I shall show further on, some families left

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

Tiyas
Thandans

*595 With the Thandans and the Tiyas (Tiyyas) of north Cochin, there
[114] were happily none of these difficulties, and I was able to study them at
my ease. On the 23rd of July, 1939, I paid my first visit to Kerala
when I drove to Palghat from Ootacamund in the Nilgiris and went to a
Tiya house in Lakkidi in Walluvanad with an interpreter. The Tiyas
we met that day were two men, brothers, who shared a wife. When we
entered the yard of their broken-down palm leaf house, she was sitting
bare-breasted, suckling a little boy whom she told us was hers. The
●[611] two men, whose names I did not ascertain, told us that they followed
marumakkathayam, which was surprising. In those days, I knew too
little about Kerala to ask them if they came from north Malabar, as they
probably did. But I have since heard from a blacksmith family which I
visited at the same place on the 12th of November 1949, that they had
indeed come from north Malabar, and that this was the reason why they
were matrilineal. Their polyandry, on the other hand, was correlated
with the economic plight in which they found themselves, and they had
taken to it because it was the customary way to solve such difficulties
with their fellows of the same caste in the south. They had no property
and told us that they worked as paid labourers. For the house, they
[420] paid four annas a year to a local Brahmin landlord. They said, nevertheless, that polyandry was dying out and that the Nayars, for instance,
did not practise it any longer. Theirs was obviously a sporadic instance
of a matrilineal Tiya family from north Malabar in which the wife was
being shared by two brothers in a south Malabar taluk, where fraternal
polyandry prevails. It would be unwise to make any generalizations from
this as it was, I think, quite an exceptional and probably isolated case.

On the 25th and 26th of October 1949, together with my interpreters,
I visited a large Thandan household, about two miles east of Ottappalam. The family living there were called Appayl Watakkeh, and they
belonged to the Appayl *tarawad*. The buildings in the compound con-
[351] sisted of one large mansion with a courtyard in front, at the end of
which was a smaller house. Cattle and some dogs roamed about in the
courtyard, where paddy was also drying. In the background, the green
[342] plantain, papaya and areca nut palms, contrasted sharply with the red
soil and the laterite stones from which the houses were built, and the
soaring trunks of tall coconut trees stood out, here and there.

*595 We met the *karanavan*, called Raman, a man of forty eight, wearing
115 only a piece of cotton from the waist down. He was wrinkled and partly
bald, but very amiable and helpful when it came to questioning him.
[551] On the first day, we spoke in general terms to him about the Thandan

*595 the cross-roads of the main Shoranur-Palghat highway of the road to
564 Lakkidi, a few furlongs down the latter, on the right hand side. In con-
[361] trast to the Thandan houses to which we had been, although not to the Tiya (Thiyya) houses of the Cochin labourers, the place looked rather
[342] miserable. It was a thatched palm-leaf house, standing on a red laterite loam platform, in the middle of some paddy fields. There were signs
[341] about that these Tathans were not only goldsmiths but that they now
[231] also practised agriculture. There was paddy lying about to dry in heaps in the yard, and there were stalls for bullocks at the back.

*595 We interviewed a man called Raman and his brother Kochen, aged
[601] fifty four and fifty two respectively, who lived polyandrously with their wife, Kurumba, forty five years old. They seemed rather impressed by
[574] us, and were reluctant to speak. They observed the outward forms of hospitality, however, and presented us with fresh coconuts for us to drink the milk.

Raman told us that the household's name was Padijarehil, meaning "Western", and that it was part of five others which constituted the
● [611] Uzhugaparekil *tarawad*. The latter was *makkathayam*, as we expected,
[614] and exogamous, as was also their *kiriyam*, although, here too, they only observed the rule in matters which concerned those members of it whom
*595 they knew. They had two and a half acres of paddy fields, in simple
427 *verumpattam* lease from a Nambudri Brahmin janmi called Kodiertha-
243 mana. For this they paid five rupees a year and handed in a part of the harvest – five hundred *parahs*, I have in my notes, three hundred from the *kanni* crop and two hundred from the *magaram*.[1] As it was an ordinary *verumpattam*, there was no renewal fee. They had a deficit this year of forty *parahs* (roughly lbs. 866⅛) and they were wondering what they could do to make it good. Last year they had done "other work"
[464] (presumably such as hiring themselves out as labourers) in order to raise the cash needed to compensate for the deficiency in grain, and
*595 they might do the same thing now. When I asked them what kind of
[326] goldsmith's work they did, they laughed and said that they had given
[336] this up; how could they carry on with their traditional profession, they asked, when the sovereign which was once worth Rs. 25 had reached Rs. 77?

[601] Raman and Kochen had had eleven children in their polyandrous

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[804] [1] This again seems too much. It is equivalent to lbs. 10,830 (1Palghat *parah* = 10 *edengalis* = 40 *nalis* (1 *nali* = *tolas* 21⅔ in s. Walluvanad and Palghat) = 866,40 *tolas*; as 40 *tolas* = 1 lb. in s. Malabar, 1 *parah* = 866,40 : 40 = 21⅔ lbs and 500 = lbs 10,830).

of the group with B; they are the claims A has upon *a* and her children being expressed by A's children. It is these claims of the brothers and sisters upon each other which are the fundamental principle Dumont has detected as the common background in South Indian kinship. I am concerned neither with debunking the role of the "alliance" nor with defending the "principle of the unity of siblings," but merely with examining this idea of the "transfer of affinity" from generation to generation. Notice, however, that this formulation permits us to understand the formal customary background of a sister's daughter marriage mentioned in connection with the Brahman. That type of marriage is simply a tightening of the claims in accordance with the emphasis on endogamy and hypergamy in the Brahman caste. A description of the claims between brothers and sisters explains what appears to be a curious phenomenon much more adequately than Dumont's recourse to the "inheritance" of affinity. 000

To return to general issues: Dumont must be given credit for having detected the uniformity in some fundamental features of South Indian kinship systems, but he has expressed the matter still in lineal terms as an opposition between "kin" and "affines." I suggest that uniformity is better explained in terms of kin categories and the fundamental claims of the brothers and sisters upon each other. This is the reason why we find a centripetal tendency so clearly at work in South India. Smaller and smaller circles of endogamy form purer and purer circles of kin who may be permitted to claim—at least in their own minds—higher ritual status. This also explains the curious aversion, even among the humblest caste, against "mixtures" in their pedigrees.

Our formulation of South Indian kinship draws attention to the shifting character of descent. On the basis of a very similar kin structure, different groups operate various descent preferences: even within the same caste we find some who choose patrilineal descent and some who choose matrilineal descent as distinctive characteristics. It should be clear that the important kin groups are the circles—*curru*—noted by Karve, Banks ("sondakara castes"), and others. Descent is sometimes so secondary that, as Dumont observes, succession and inheritance run counter to descent ideas in numerous castes (1957*b*, p. 20). I would suggest that we have in these low castes a Kandyan preference based on endogamy and bilateral kinship. We shall see, when we turn toward the Malabar coast, that with the development of matrilineal descent, hypergamy again makes its unmistakable appearance.

THE MALABAR COAST

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In our consideration of South Indian kinship systems we have been concerned, first, to detect an underlying pattern for the bewilderingly

121 complex, contradictory, and difficult material collected by many au-
611 thors, and, second, to test the Ceylon model of the association of hy-
564 pergamy with unilineal descent. It will be recalled that Gough's Kum-
bapettai village seemed to include the variations in kinship found
dispersed over a large area in Ceylon. On the Malabar coast, the situa-
tion is, if possible, made even more complicated: in this famous re-
gion we find every possible variation of our model, from matrilineal
hypergamous systems to endogamous and patrilineal hypergamous
systems, all existing pell-mell in the same area. In general, it seems
clear that these various features are used as structural indices to dis-
[554] tinguish communities from one another. The over-all pattern, by con-
trast, seems uncluttered: in lower levels of social rank we find, on the
whole, endogamous castes which so far as the material goes exhibit the
fundamental characteristics of the general structure. In the higher
levels of Hindu and Muslim society we find an intense preoccupation
with status and social rank, and unilineal descent systems are built out
of the general structure. Then, in the limiting cases, each matrilineage
behaves as if it were a single unique caste having only hypergamous
connections with the outside world.

In this section, I shall first attempt to establish the existence of the
general structure in castes in both North and South Malabar, and I
shall then go on to examine the questions of descent and hypergamy.
[197] Before we come to specific cases, I should observe that the region ex-
[171] hibits an impressive general cultural uniformity: the language, Malay-
alam, is very closely related to Tamil; the details of the customs find
immediate echoes not only in the material from the rest of South In-
dia but among Buddhists in Ceylon as well. Quite apart from struc-
[184] tural matters, there is an intuitive appreciation of the fact that we
are in a civilization with a distinctive style of its own in which the
different customs of discrete groups appear as permutations and
combinations of the same set of general ideas.

101 The term Nayar covers a motley collection of categories of people.
564 Primarily, they are aristocratic Nayar descended from the important
royal houses of Cochin and Travancore. There are also people of
servant castes who have allegedly taken on the Nayar title in the last
century and are only Nayar by courtesy. Some of these categories may
be fully endogamous and others, at the higher levels, hypergamous.
Though there are again uniformities, it is important to specify which
613 group of Nayar are being considered. The word *taravad*, used by
various castes in Malabar, denotes a group of matrilineally related
persons with the same name who observe rules of exogamy. The
taravad may be split into smaller property-holding groups, each with a
head *Karanavan*.[7]

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[7] "One who 'acts' ": comp. *Karanava*, "to do" in Sinhalese.

601 terms of address. Related to this Dravidian terminology we find, as
[605] might be expected, that all parallel cousins on both sides are forbidden
[582] as sexual partners and consequently there is categorical cross-
602 cousin marriage (p. 397). We are not given any details regarding the
circle of kin which we have called the micro-caste, for Gough is again
more concerned with "lineages." However, it is quite clear that all the
[171] kinship customs, especially the obligations between the various categories
of kin, appear very similar to the Sinhalese.

601 The categories of the terminology are widely extended and rela-
602 tions with paternal kin are formally defined. The son, for instance,
[769] must make annual offerings to his dead father's spirit. "Paternal kin
are known and accorded kinship terms within a range of three to five
generations" (Gough, 1955*a*, p. 55). The father's sister's son was considered
to have special claims on the girl (Schneider and Gough,
1961, p. 398).

602 It is noteworthy that with the residence pattern in which men live
591 on lineage land with their MB, it is precisely the rights of the paternal
kin that are emphasized in customary rituals. Thus paternal kin have
an important place in all *rites de passage:* first pregnancy, naming,
first rice feeding, *tali*-tying, marriage, first menstruation, and death.
[553] At the naming ceremony, for instance, the infant's father's mother
chooses the name, the father's father confers it, and the father gives a
[431] gold gift (Schneider and Gough, 1961, p. 401).

These rights and obligations are of interest in contrast to the Sin-
[171] halese, where residence tends to be patrilocal and where it is, in fact,
the claims of the maternal kin that are given the most prominence in
the various life-cycle ceremonies.

602 We should observe that even the joking relationship, which is an
605 interesting feature of the Sinhalese cross-cousin relationship, is dupli-
171 cated in North Malabar: "Male and female cross cousins had a joking
relationship with implicit sexual privileges." And, of course, marriage
was initiated with the "gift of the cloth."

582 So far as the general structure is concerned, there is little doubt as
121 to where we are. However, we are not given much information regard-
ing endogamy and hypergamy. Gough notes only incidentally that
[114] "ordinary" Nambiars . . . married exclusively with each other"
[611] (1955*a*, p. 56), which suggests kin group endogamy with a likely diminution
of unilineal descent ideology in such groups. Gough elsewhere
[613] also observes in passing that there were "hypergamous marriages in
aristocratic lineages" (1961, p. 400), which conforms to the idea expressed
above. Since the pattern can be seen with greater clarity in the
evidence regarding the Cochin aristocrats, I refrain from discussing the
question of hypergamy here.

NORTH TIYYAR

121 591 60 [564] [114] The organization of kinship among the Tiyyar is so similar to the Nayar castes that an extended discussion is unnecessary. Gough observes a difference of degree in the question of the locality of marriage: whereas Nayar men may return to the lands of their MB and marry there, the Tiyyar tend to be grouped together in patrilocal clusters, except that there are some among them who also return to live with their MB (1961, p. 409). These slight differences are unlikely to be of great significance, for the reader should recall that many of these marriages take place in the same village or area, that in this region houses and huts are easy to build and that Nayar men tend to build houses for their wives and children as well.

60 171 In Gough's writings the similarity of the kin structure between the Tiyyar and the Sinhalese is particularly evident. The claims of the cross-cousins upon each other, the categorical Dravidian terminology, the nature of the marriage tie, and the various details of custom clearly indicate that we are dealing with the same cultural idiom.

604 588 The claims of the MB and FZ are manifested in *rites de passage*. In the *tali* ceremony (which is the well-known prepuberty rite in this area) both these persons appear, and the FZ (or MB wife) ties the *tali* as a "potential mother-in-law" (Gough, 1955*a*, p. 58).

605 582 585 [171] The role of the cross-cousins is perhaps more revealing. "The cross-cousin's claim to become a girl's husband . . . must be met at the . . . marriage ceremony if the girl marries some other man. As the couple leave the house, the girl's cross-cousin steps forward in mock attack . . . He is bought off by the bridegroom with a nominal fee and the couple then pass unmolested" (Gough, 1955*a*, p. 59).[8] This symbolic statement is identical to the Sinhalese, where the cross-cousin stops the bridal couple at the gate and demands his rights. He is given one hundred betel leaves and the couple moves on.

The Tiyyar of Cochin

564 611 591 It is intriguing to study the kin structure of the Tiyyar caste South Malabar and Cochin—the same term as in North Malabar—which

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[8] [114] There is an interesting contradiction in Gough's materal: though she writes of the similarity of the Nayar and the Tiyyar, she notes that with the Tiyyar the MBS (i.e., FZD) is the correct marriage partner (1955*a*, p. 57), whereas with the Nayar the FZS (i.e., MBD) is considered the rightful claimant (1961, p. 398). In view of Dumont's discussion, it would be interesting to know whether significant preferences are involved. Gough does not pursue the matter, but given the contradictions involved in patrilateral cross-cousin marriage (e.g., it cannot be combined with hypergamy rules) it is likely that Gough is merely using a shorthand formula for symmetrical cross-cousin marriage.

564 here turns out to be patrilineal and patrilocal. We shall see that, as
• 611 usual, the question of descent is attached to the same general struc-
[591] tures as elsewhere.

613 We first note that the "patrilineage" of the South is called a *taravad*
like the matrilineal units of the Nayar. The patrilineage is reported to
be exogamous with a depth of five to seven generations united by the
595 worship of lineage gods, ancestors, and snakes. Marriage tends to be
[591] patrilocal, and one of the interesting features of the Tiyyar of this
[171] area is that, as with the Sinhalese, polyandrous marriages are freely
permitted. A woman is married to a group of brothers who have access
585 to her, it is said, by order of seniority. The ceremony of marriage
171 again involves the gift of the cloth, and we note the custom of feeding
the groom or grooms and the bride with porridge and milk as with
various groups in Ceylon.

593 Inheritance is in the male line, but women retain rights in their
[428] natal household. Indeed, this right is expressed in the customary rela-
tions between brothers and sisters. At divorce, the woman returns to
[586] her brother. Her eldest brother is considered her guardian. At the
[765] death of a married woman, her brothers and their children observe
[183] ritual pollution. At the death of a man, his sister's sons observe pol-
lution and perform mourning offerings to his spirit.

604 The customary claim of the MB and the FZ are given recognition in
588 numerous ceremonies. In the prepuberty rituals, a girl goes through
[613] a mock-marriage ceremony with a boy from a "lineage" into which
[605] she might marry, who clearly stands to her in the relation of cross-
cousin. Her "mother's brother's wife" (FZ?) parts her hair in certain
pregnancy ceremonies. The ritual husband-boy is brought by his MB,
and the girl by her MB. The boy places the *tali* necklace—indicative
of married status—on her neck, where it is tied by her FZ.

582 Gough notes that cross-cousin marriage is "preferential," though
605 with the observation that it is not "enjoined to the extent" that it is
114 in the North (1955*a*, p. 62). It is clear that this statement refers to
actual cross-cousin, not categorical cross-cousin, marriage. We are
informed that parallel cousins on both sides are tabooed and must
conclude that here again we have the Dravidian pattern of categori-
cal cross-cousin marriage.

601 I have no information about the terminology of reference or address,
576 though it seems likely that terms of reference, at least, are identical to
those of the North Tiyyar.

121 I think that all the elements of the general structure can be detected
602 in this system. There is categorical cross-cousin marriage, and the
various claims of the MB and FZ upon Ego are indicated in ritual
terms. This is quite in accordance, as we noted before, with the strong

claim of the brothers and sisters upon one another, a point which is 121
indeed specifically made by Gough (1955*a*, p. 61). 602

In view of all this evidence, it is somewhat disconcerting to discover 602
that Gough finds it necessary to identify "residual matrilineages" to 613
explain the role of maternal kin as well as the taboos on maternal 114
parallel cousins in this caste. We are faced once more with the inexplicable bias in the direction of "lineage" explanations to the exclusion of others even in so sophisticated an observer as Dr. Gough.

She notes (1957*a*, p. 61) that "the former existence of exogamous 602
matrilineal clans underlines this persistence of the bond between 614
women and their natal kinfolk, especially their brothers." But the 114
evidence she gives (p. 60) to show even the former existence of such clans is hardly convincing: "My informants knew nothing about these clans except that they were once exogamous. They are not so today, since some people do not remember their clan names. Though the [582]
clans have died out, marriage is prohibited between known matrilineal kin."

Although the general structure is verified in this group as well, we 602
have no information regarding hypergamy. We can only say with 611
certainty that the comparison of the Tiyyar in North and South [582]
Malabar shows quite directly that slight variations permit the general structure to be linked to a patrilineal as well as a matrilineal descent ideology. The underlying theme is general, and the variations in descent, in residence, in inheritance are local and highly specific.

THE MATRILINEAL CASTES OF COCHIN AND HYPERGAMY

Before we turn to an examination of the aristocratic matrilineages of 121
Cochin which have fascinated many anthropologists by their perfectly 564
logical but highly exotic solutions to sex and marriage, I wish to 582
underline some of the principles of endogamy and hypergamy. 613

First, the purpose of endogamy is to cut off the unit from kinship connections with other units. A complete severance of all intercourse (food and sex are usually chosen as symbols) renders the unit unique, but it will not in itself establish hierarchical superiority. To express hierarchy (as well as separation) some asymmetrical relations are logically necessary. In endogamous castes this takes the form of asymmetrical forms of address, dress symbolism, and, significantly, a rule such as "They will take food from us (*A*), but we will not take food from them (*B*)—*A*, in other words, is superior to *B*.

Second, when the groups are placed on an interlocking hierarchy, more subtle expressions can be used. "*A* will not accept food from *B*,

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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(1961*b*, pp. 20 ff.), and it is important in tying the Nayar material into 121
the South Indian picture. 613

With all these similarities, in what sense, then, is this system a [114]
logical elaboration of the general structure? What makes the structure [184]
of kinship among the aristocratic Nayar a special case is that in it we find again the combination of hypergamy and unilineal descent.

As we noted above, extensive hypergamy in the context of matrilineage results in a consistent differentiation of status between lineages, and it allows special ritual status to be claimed by each autonomous matrilineage. It will be observed that matrilateral cross-cousin marriage is the only consistent pattern that can be associated with the hypergamous and matrilineal kin structure described above.

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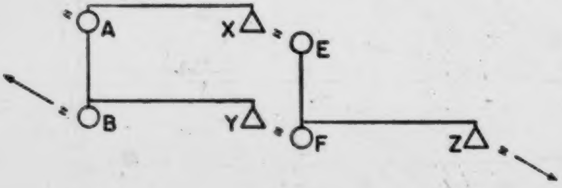

Figure 38. Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage.

In figure 38, sister A establishes a *sambandam* connection with a person of superior status. Her children, B and Y (members of the matrilineage), are themselves superior in status to the children of their MB (X), who has a *sambandam* with a woman of equal or lower status to himself (E). Hence if cross-cousin marriage is to take place, the MBD (F) may be hypergamously connected with Y (i.e., matrilateral cross-cousin marriage), but B, like her mother A, will be given further up the hierarchy and cannot be permitted to have *sambandam* with Z (i.e., patrilateral cross-cousin marriage).

We should note in passing that this association of MBD marriage 121
and hypergamy in these castes is a remarkable corroboration of Leach's 114
hypothesis regarding the structural implications of matrilateral cross- 582
cousin marriage systems. Leach (1951) writes of patrilineal systems 611 •
associated with hypogamy (women go down) among the Kachin. It is [171]
certainly salutary to find that this mirror-image of Leach's model, that is, matrilateral cross-cousin marriage in a matrilineal context, is associated with hypergamy, asymmetry, and distinctions of status.

To return to Malabar, the combination of matrilineal descent to- 121
gether with the rules of hypergamy is consistent with great differenti- 564
ation of status between the descent groups—so much so that in the 611
proliferation of descent groups it appears to be difficult, indeed impossible, to say where one caste ends and the other begins. Some de-

121 scent groups may be generally placed in the highest categories and
564 still be connected by a chain of descending unions with such categories
611 as the Sudra. To recall the situation in Ceylon, such groups as the
[171] Karava (Fishers), who are usually seen as a "separate" caste in other
parts of the island, are associated with the hierarchy of Vellalar matrilineal descent groups on the eastern littoral. Thus, in the Malabar context, too, a category such as Nayar covers a wide spectrum of
121 ranked descent groups. Gough suggests that apart from the royal
564 matrilineages of the various kingdoms, it is possible to detect five
[613] subcategories of Nayar groups (1961, pp. 308–309): (*a*) Kiriattil and
Vellayma Nayar, (*b*) Puratta Charna (Outdoor Retainers) Nayar (but these have subdivisions such as Pariccha Menon (Leaders of the Shield), (*c*) Agatta Charna (Indoor Retainers) Nayar, (*d*) Pallichan Nayar, and (*e*) Sudra Nayar. This is not a hard and fast hierarchy and we are told (p. 309) that "In some districts they ranked in the order given and men of the higher [category] might marry women of the lower [category]; the reverse was in theory forbidden. In other districts the [categories] seem to have disputed for precedence and *not to have regularly intermarried*" (my italics).

121 It is clear that in this system it is possible, for instance, to have
564 at the top a single matrilineage whose men may be connected to a
613 small group of matrilineages who are equals and who marry among
themselves. They in turn may be connected with a larger group of matrilineages of a still lower caste, and so on. Furthermore, actual *sambandam* connections may or may not be systematically established between the levels. As long as the principles are clear, it hardly matters what the status-bearing groups are called: in widening circles we have the matrilineage, which may be part of a hypergamous cluster (category), which in turn may be part of a more inclusive "subcaste" or indeed an endogamous caste.

121 Also in the Cochin region, according to Gough (1961, p. 319), hy-
114 pergamy is a custom of the aristocratic matrilineages and is associated
564 with the prestige of unilineal descent, whereas in the levels "below
613 the Nayar temple menials" the categories were endogamous "as is
usual in the caste system throughout India."

[833] Why hypergamy at the aristocratic levels? Gough in answer to this
[554] question has taken a curious combination of materialist-psychoana-
lytic arguments: it is her theory that hypergamy accords with the power structure of the political system and with the special reasons why virgins must be deflowered by powerful men before they are safe for ordinary mortals (see Gough 1955*a* and 1961, *passim*).

Dumont has proposed an important, but very different, answer. He notes rightly that the most powerful and superior Nayar lineage still had hypergamous connections with Brahman who were ritually su-

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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121 they were landless orphans. If he bought land, built a house and settled there
564 with his sister, bringing up her children, he would gain social status. He said
613 he knew of many a poor labourer serving in the mill, saving money to establish a Tharvad in his sister's name and become "somebody" in his caste. (Karve, 1953, p. 267)

The problem of finding suitable husbands for the women of aristocratic matrilineal Tharvads has been solved by the Nambudiri Brahman connection in Cochin. The situation is not very different with North Malabar aristocrats. We are told that the Kolattiri lineage had difficulty in getting accepted as of high status among the ancient "Kshatriya" lineages of Kottayam and Kurumbranad, so the Kolattiri Rajas brought a caste called Koil Tamburan from Travancore. "Kolattiri women married Koil Tamburan or Nambudiri men and Kolattiri men Samantan Nambiar or Nambiar women" (Gough, 1955*a*, p. 56).

Karve with her usual insight and evocative examples puts the issue simply (1953, pp. 258–259): "The Kshatriyas claim descent from the sun-family of the ancient Hindu Kshatriyas of the north—the house of Rama. All the sons born in Kshatriya families, i.e., ruling houses of Travancore and Cochin have Sanskrit names of the Sun-god with the suffix varmā . . . We have already seen that in olden times as a rule and even now generally the Kshatriya women have Nambudiri Brahmins as husbands. . . . There is a village near Cochin belonging to a rich Nayar Thārvad . . . which is called the 'village of evening visits of the Nambudris.'" And this accurate and colorful picture is rounded up with the direct statement, "Among poorer Nayars cross-cousin marriage is favoured."

Other Evidence from Malabar

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611 We have considered the evidence from Malabar from the point of view of other South Indian systems and have, I believe, been able to establish both the principles of the general structure and the association of systems of hypergamy with unilineal descent. A further point to note is that systems of descent, at least in this region, could be considered as a secondary feature to a large extent independent of the specific forms of kinship and marriage. Very similar groups appear to follow different forms of descent in various regions. We should
[171] recall that even the Sinhalese, who are regarded as being "patrilineal" by many authors today, followed "matrilineal" descent at least among the royal family in the seventeenth century. And conversely one author has noted that in some parts of Kerala "the Nairs also follow the father right social system" (D'Souza, 1959, p. 493).

[564] There is a vast body of literature, especially in connection with

Malabar, in which patrilineal and matrilineal castes who are similar 121
in their kinship customs are described, and again we find that other 564
sections of the same casts are patrilineal or matrilineal in different 611
localities. In parts of Ceylon I would hear villagers suggest that sons [171]
took their "names" from their father and daughters from their mother, a reflection not so much of descent (for these ideas were not applied in practice) but of the difference between the sexes.

Even the Muslims are not very different. On the Malabar coast the 779
diversity of origins in the Muslim community can be easily traced in 184
the complex body of customs, appellations, different signs, and prac- 602
tice whereby subgroups appear to distinguish one another. Gough 613
(1961) has discussed some features of the matrilineal Muslims (Ma- 121
pilla); D'Souza (1959) in a carefully documented article observes that, leaving aside a special group who call themselves *Arabi* and attempt to follow traditional Islam, Muslims in general conform to the patterns of kinship usual in Malabar and are divided into patrilineal and matrilineal *taravads* (p. 492). Moreover, in the case of patrilineal *taravads*, several of them again come together to form an *endogamous* group; hence in any locality there are several endogamous Moplah groups (p. 493). He goes on to make the following observation (p. 498):

> In the coastal North Malabar, as one proceeds southwards to places like Quilandy and Badagara, the mother right social organization undergoes a change. The change becomes quite distinct in the coastal region of South Malabar. The change in mother right traits . . . may be primarily attributed [428]
> to the fact that whereas in North Malabar the ancestral property is inherited exclusively in the female line, in the south it is inherited . . . in the male line. But the social organization is essentially mother right and the modifications are such as suit the change in the principle of inheritance.

It is not merely this shifting picture of descent and inheritance 121
which strikes one as being entirely in line with the material collected 564
by Iyer (1909, 1912, 1937) in all kinds of small caste groups, for 114
D'Souza (1959, p. 502) firmly establishes that the Muslim Mapilla also follow the Nambudiri–Nayar model of hypergamy with considerable dedication: "For instance, the Thangal males can marry women from any other groups of Moplahs [Mapilla] but Thangal women cannot marry any man other than a Thangal. An Arabi male can marry any [Mapilla] woman other than a Thangal, but the Arabi woman can marry, besides an Arabi male, only a Thangal male, and so on."

There is little doubt that the marriage customs recorded by D'Souza 121
bear a close similarity to those recorded for the Moors of Ceylon [58-
earlier in this volume. D'Souza's evidence on names is not directed to 171]
the question of hypergamy and prestige, but it does appear that names [551]

565 into 64 gramams (caste areas), within each of
631 which a Nambudiri assembly composed of the
623 oldest members of the patrilineal extended families of the area met periodically to arrange public ceremonies and tried cases of offence against caste laws. Within each gramam, the
[564] Nambudiris were divided into ranked subcastes according to their wealth and ritual functions; these,
565 however, need not concern us here. Over the
631 whole area, a dignitary known as the Aravan-
693 cheri Tamburakkal, [12] who resided in Travancore, was universally acknowledged as the ritual and administrative leader of the Nambudiris. This high priest was accorded the right to crown the kings of both Calicut and Cochin, though these rulers were traditionally at enmity. His jurisdiction in matters of the religious law governing social relations between castes, was acknowledged throughout the area. The field of social relations of the Nambudiris was thus the whole of Kerala.

565 The ritual prestige of Nambudiris was sup-
596 ported by their wealth: each patrilineal extended family owned the land in at least one village, and in addition local groups of family heads managed lands owned by important Brahman temples in each kingdom. The Nambudiris had a patrilineal
[611] descent system of a peculiar type described below.

565 Below the Nambudiris in ritual rank came the
● 613 royal matrilineal lineages of Calicut, Walluva-
631 nad and Cochin. Though undoubtedly Nayar in origin and general culture, each of these lineages considered itself superior in ritual rank to its

565 Nayar subjects within the kingdom. Between
● 613 kingdoms, royal lineages disputed for rank and
631 would not intermarry: though exogamous, therefore, each lineage considered itself to form a separate and unique [13] subcaste. The Cochin lineage, being more ancient than the rest, claimed the ritual rank of Kshattriyas (the second of the four varnas or major caste-groups of ancient North India Vedic Society, in ancient times kings and warriors.) The Walluvanad and Calicut lineages, of more recent Nayar origin, were not strictly recognized as Kshattriyas, but were accorded the title of Samantans, a
[243] Sanskrit word meaning "leaders." In each royal
lineage, the oldest man of the whole lineage, irrespective of branch, was the crowned king and administered traditional secular rule with assistance from advisers of wealthy Nambudiri families of the kingdom, some of whom were employed as ambassadors.

Each kingdom was divided into nads or chiefdoms. In the Zamorin's kingdom, at the height of its power, some of these nads were former independent kingdoms which had been conquered by Calicut but were still ruled by their traditional monarchs who paid tribute to Calicut. These nads included Parappanad, Beypore and Chavakkad, each of whose rulers, though feudatory, claimed and were accorded higher ritual rank than the Zamorin's lineage by reason of their more ancient tradition of government. Other nads of the Calicut kingdom were ruled by hereditary Nayar chiefs (naduvaris) originally appointed by the Zamorin. [14] These ruled with

565 613 631 similar powers to those of the feudatory monarchs, but, though they were accorded the title of Samantans, were considered of lower ritual rank than the Zamorin's lineage. Similarly, some nads of the Cochin kingdom were governed by conquered feudatory kings of higher ritual rank than, but administratively subordinate to, the royal lineage, and others by lower ranking Samantan chiefs appointed by the king. Within each kingdom, the Samantan chiefs' lineages formed a single subcaste.

565 621 423 Each nad was in turn divided into villages or desams, the basic units of the political system. A desam appears usually to have covered from one to four square miles, comprising one or more stretches of dry garden land surrounded by, or surrounding, flats of alluvial paddy land. The land in each desam was owned by one landlord family of superior ritual rank to the other occupants of the villages. In some villages, the land was owned by a single Nambudiri partilineal extended family whose large house stood in a central position in the village. In others, it was owned by one or other branch of the royal matrilineage which had built a small palace in the village and whose eldest male member acted as a village headman. In other villages, the land was owned by the chiefly matrilineal lineage of the nad, whether this [15] were of feudatory rank of vassal Samantan rank. Again in this case the chiefly family would live in a small palace in the centre of the village and fulfill the role of headman. In other villages, the land was owned by some famous Hindu temple of the kingdom, often

621 occupied separate sets of villages and were not
631 subject to each others' jurisdiction. In war,
565 however, they might interdine freely and spend
644 the night in each others' houses. In villages
owned by Nambudiris or by Nambudiri-owned temples the retainer-Nayar were of group (1), in royal villages, of group (2), and in chiefly and village headmen's lineages, of group (3). In Calicut and Walluvanad however, group (3) was further subdivided into Agattu Charna Nayars or indoor retainers, [18] and Purattu Charnas or outdoor retainers. Purattu Charnas were retainers to chiefs and headmen, Agattu Charnas houseservants and clerks (with the title Menon - clerk) within the royal palaces. In Calicut, the Purattu Charnas were still further subdivided into ordinary Purattu Charnas who served chiefs and headmen, and special Purattu Charnas or Pariccha Menons who formed the personal bodyguard of the kind and senior princes.

613 In each village, there were traditionally four,
621 five or six matrilineages of the appropriate re-
427 tainer subcaste. The separate households or
566 property-groups within each lineage had the
hereditary right, granted by the Raja, to occupy freely stretches of garden land, and to lease large plots of wet rice land on long-term tenure from the janmi. This tenure was called kanam; the tenant, a kanamdar or kanakkaran. At the start of a period of tenure, the legal guardian (oldest man or karanavan) of the Nayar retainer household paid a lump sum in cash to the janmi, called kanam. Thereafter he paid an annual rent

613 in kind, from which was deducted a small pro-
621 portion of the original cash sum. When the ori-
427 ginal sum had been exhausted the kanakkaran
566 recommenced paying full rent, or renewed the
sum, or else surrendered the land. It seems likely that these sums [19] of money were traditionally paid only on the succession to headship of a new janmi or a new kanakkaran on the death of the old, or at irregular intervals convenient to both parties. Both kanam and jenmam rights could be sold, but a kanakkaran could not be evicted without the consent of the local Nayar assembly. The system allowed of a certain degree of spatial mobility and of the periodic segmentation of the Nayar property-group, some branches of which might even move to another village if lands became short. On the whole, however, kanam tenures were of long duration, and a Nayar property-group might remain stable for several generations.

566 In addition to their role as tenants, members
of the retainer subcastes had other economic
and also ritual relations with their landlord.
[794] They were called adiyar (servants) of their jan-
mi and must attend and participate at his house-
hold ceremonies. Women of the retainer lin-
[357] eages worked as house-servants of the janmi's
family, while older Nayar men who had retired
[427] from the army might be employed as bailiffs who
collected the janmi's rents and organized the
labour of his serfs.

564 In addition to the Nayars, members of certain
794 other aristocratic castes were usually present
in each village. These included the temple

437 landlords, who would otherwise, apparently, hav
423 been excluded from the cash economy. Such
[511] money could be spent by the Nambudiri and Nayar
aristocracy on clothing and imported luxury
goods available in Muslim bazaars in the towns.
Some Muslims also held kanam lands in villages
whence they could obtain rice and vegetables.
Others bought food for cash from Nayar tenants.
[556] Apart from the kanam tenure the use of cash was,
however, extremely restricted in inland villages,
and surplus cash was converted into gold ornaments
or other objects of ostentation. Among
[583] the lower castes small coins had a symbolic
value, and a fixed number were handed over in
marriage payments, but their use in economic
exchange among the lower castes appears to have
been negligible.

434 In spite therefore of the considerable overseas
554 trade, the complex division of labour, and the
marked differences in wealth (expressed chiefly
in size of houses, differences of clothing and
jewelry, and types of food) between the several
castes, the overall economy of Kerala in the
traditional period was relatively stationary, and
such social mobility as there was, was confined
to the Muslims, Christians and "good" Hindu
castes above Nayar retainers. It appears to
[613] have been this fact which permitted the persistence
[631] of such a relatively rigid feudal system
and the existence, within each homogeneous local
caste group, of a lineage system as the main organizing
principle.

000 (3) Traditional Political Administration

596 might marry a Nambudiri woman and beget
611 children for his family. Nambudiri spinsters,
582 of whom there were many, remained in their
natal houses and were maintained by their kinsmen.
The eldest son of a Nambudiri family
[595] might however have several Nambudiri wives
and also several Nayar concubines. Nambudiri
younger sons lived and ate in their natal households,
headship of which passed from the eldest
son down the line of his brothers and then droppe
to the eldest son in the filial generation. In this
way the Nambudiri family was prevented from
splitting into segments, and was enabled to
maintain its position on the ancestral estate over
[597] many generations. If in any generation a family
had no son, succession was ensured by the
adoption of a daughter's husband or of a man of
a family related in the cognatic line.

613 In the royal lineages, since each lineage,
582 though exogamous, regarded itself as a separate
837 caste and admitted no peers, sexual unions were
entirely hypergamous. In Cochin and Walluvanad,
royal women had liaisons only with [37] Nambudiris
of the highest and wealthiest subcastes
within the kingdom; royal men, with women of
chiefly, village headmen or retainer Nayar lineages.
In the Calicut lineage, which came to
power later and took time to establish its ritual
rank, royal women till the 18th century had
liaisons either with Nambudiri men or with men
of the ancient royal lineages of tributary kingdoms,
who though through conquest were subordinate
to the upstart Zamorins, were still regarded
by them as of higher ritual rank. Later

613 when they had established themselves as of high
582 ritual rank, and when some of their vassal lineages
837 had died out, the Zamorins too looked only to Nambudiri for genitors. Royal men similarly had liaisons with women of the lower matrilineal subcastes, as in the Cochin and Walluvanad kingdoms.

582 Among temples servants, retainer-Nayars
837 and middle class Nayars, the majority of unions took place between individuals of the same subcaste. A small proportion of retainer and middle class Nayar women had liaisons with Nambudiris of the lower subcastes, Embrandiri Brahman priests (who followed the same descent system as Nambudiris) or with royal, chiefly, village headmen or temple servant men. In the Nayar village headmen's lineages, a larger proportion of women had liaisons with men of the chiefly or royal lineages, or with Nambudiris; and in the chiefs' lineages, with royal or Nambudiri men, though in these subcastes too, individuals of the same subcaste but different lineages might have unions with each other. Similarly, a small [38] proportion of men in each Nayar subcaste, down to retainers, had liaisons with Nayar women of a lower subcaste, down to the rank of middle class Nayars. Chart I shows the mutual ritual ranking and the direction of hypergamous unions between the higher castes of the kingdom. In the temple servant castes, whose occupational allegiance was exclusively with Nambudiris, women had liaisons either with Nambudiris or with men of their own caste. There was no intermarriage either way between temple

582 servant castes or between temple servants on
837 the one hand and royalty, chiefs or village headmen, who belonged to separate hierarchies.

Hypergamous unions, even more than other
582 unions between Nayars of the same subcaste,
613 emphasized the exclusively sexual role of the
837 lovers and genitors of a Nayar lineage. In most circumstances a higher caste lover lived and ate in his natal household and was maintained by it; he visited his mistress after supper and left before breakfast, after which he took a purifying bath before re-entering his natal house. He might not eat in his mistress's household, and following the morning bath might not touch her or his children. The only exception to these
[144] residential rules arose in the case of Nambudiris who had liaisons with royal women. These were received as temporary occupants of the palace and housed in separate buildings at the expense of the royal lineage, at some distance from the buildings occupied by the princes and the royal women. Like all other Nambudiri genitors of Nayar children, however, they [39] visited their mistresses at night and in the daytime carried out their ritual duties in private, attended by their own Nambudiri cooks and serving men.

613 It is clear however that hypergamous liaisons,
837 though of an almost exclusively sexual nature,
571 knit together the several castes concerned with the secular administration and with the religious law and public rituals of the state. Though not recognized by them as kinsmen, elderly members of aristocratic Nayar and temple servant

613 lineages still take pride in the fact that for cen-
937 turies, their lineages have been partly fathered
571 by men of the higher castes of royalty, chiefs,
and (particularly) priests. The allegiance of Nayar soldiers to their headmen, of headmen to their chiefs, and of chiefs to the king, was undoubtedly strengthened by this network of sexual ties, as was the unity of the secular and religious hierarchies, which might otherwise have been opposed.

613 IV The Traditional Lineage System of the Nayars

(1) Structure and Functions

[621] In each traditional village, four to six "military" Nayar lineages of one subcaste was present as retainers of the janmi. The retainer lineage commonly had a depth of nine to twelve generations and usually comprised between 12 to 100 members. It was called a taravad, derived from tara, the word for the raised foundation on which a house is built. Taravad can mean both the members of a lineage, living and dead, and the ancestral house from which they sprang: it corresponds to the English "house" in its sense both of ancestry and place. The members of a taravad are a group, usually of actual and not merely putative matrilineal kin, descended from a common ancestress (whose name may or may not be known), but they describe themselves as a group whose matrilineal forbears once lived in one house. That their lineage should be associated with the house befits the sedentary economy of the Nayars and the importance of their ancestral land. Powerful

613 [342] Powerful emotional ties bind a Nayar to his ancestral land and to his house, which is large and beautifully constructed of whitewashed laterite, carved wooden pillars and a tiled roof. The lineage-names of retainer-Nayars are the names of original ancestral sites in the village, e.g., Kirakkutt Velappil ("Eastern Garden"). Desavari lineages take the name of their desam, chiefly lineages of their nad, and royal lineages of their kingdom. The knowledge that their matrilineal forbears once jointly owned a house and land holds lineage-members together.

[361] Except in unusual circumstances (i.e., if it is dying out) a lineage comprises several households, traditionally congregated in separate gardens some distance apart on a stretch of dry land in the village. 613 596 Today with the vast increase in population during British rule, a lineage may comprise up to 20 or more households; traditionally, it seems usually to have contained about four to ten. Each of these households comprised a segment of the lineage, [41] usually, a group of siblings together with the children and daughters' children of the sisters. The household was also the unit whose members jointly owned ancestral garden land, kanam rice lands and movable property: I call it a property-group. The lineage as a whole (unless it were dying out and comprised only one property-group) owned no property in common and its members had no economic cooperation as a group.

613 The lineage was exogamous, and matrilineal kinship terms were extended throughout its

613 range. The rule of exogamy, and the sense of close kinship which bound members of a lineage meant that the local subcaste group of the kara (whether this comprised one or more lineages) was divided into a small number of compact groups. At assemblies the members separated out into lineage groupings. Only the legal heads (karanavans) of property-groups attended such assemblies, and within each lineage these tended to defer to each other on the basis of age, spokesmanship being left to the eldest man(also sometimes called a karanavan) of the lineage as a whole.

613 681 Though it owned no property in common, the lineage was in some contexts a corporate group in the sense of having legal responsibility for its members' acts. If some member of a lineage broke a caste law, for example by dining or fornicating with a low caste person or failing to pay dues to the temple, his whole lineage was temporarily ostracized by the assembly until it called him to book. [42] His property-group must then pay a fine (prayaschittam) to the assembly and he must go through a rite of purification before his lineage could be readmitted to caste. In cases of grave offence such as fornication with a Paraya woman, his lineage was during British rule ostracized until he had been excommunicated from lineage and caste and his funeral rites performed; during native rule until he had been executed by order of the chief of the king.

613 628 In other ways, the lineage held itself responsible for disputes entered into by its members.

613 Even in the last 50 years, quarrels between men
628 of different lineages, usually over field-boundaries or women, have resulted in prolonged hostility, sometimes with fighting, between their lineages. In South Malabar and Cochin, such hostility between individual lineages could not take the form of actual blood-feuds (kudipaga) such as were known in the politically less centralized area of North Malabar. These were prevented by the strong organization of the village assembly, the power of desavari and naduvari, and the existence of the royal court. Fighting between groups of men of different lineages, as between groups of men of adjacent villages owing allegiance to different and sometimes mutually hostile desavaris, was soon stopped by the appropriate local authority - the desavari in the first case and the naduvari in the second. If however a Nayar were slain by a man of another lineage, his matrilineal kinsmen had the right sanctioned by the king to place his body in the [43] house or the outhouse of his slayer and burn house and coprse together. His lineage might then, after paying a fee to the naduvari, select one of their number to fight a duel to the death with a chosen man of the slayer's lineage in order to avenge the murder. The lineage was thus a corporate group in contexts involving murder and offences against the religious laws of the caste, though the property-group was the corporate group in contexts involving disputes over
613 property.

602 The individual lineage was linked to its local
621 subcastes assembly by the institution of enangar.

613 In a retainer subcaste group, enangar relations 602 usually existed between each lineage and two, 621 three or four others; in the small servant caste local groups, each lineage might have only one or two enangar lineages. Enangar relations were reciprocal but not exclusive, so that a chain of relationships linked together the whole local group. Thus in a hypothetical kara containing eight retainer lineages, A to H, lineage A might have enangar relations with B, C and D; B, with A, E and F; C with A, G and H; D with A, F and G; E, with B, F and H; F with B, D and E; and G only with D and C. The enangar relationship was one of ceremonial neighbourliness and ritual cooperation. Sexual unions were also, and in some villages are still today, most common between enangar lineages, so that the enangar relationship can also be regarded as one of perpetual affinal kinship between lineages as corporate groups. Representative male and [881] female members of all enangar lineages must [765] be present and participate in ceremonies of the linked lineage at girls' initiations, at the first [769] menstruation ceremonies of a girl, at the sixteenth day ceremonies after a death in the lineage; and at ceremonial offerings to the spirit of a dead matrilineal forbear on the anniversary of the death. These ceremonies could not be carried out without the help of enangar, so that to refuse attendance was a grave offence. If however some member of a lineage broke a caste-law, the enangar, as its hereditary ritual partners, must at once announce a rupture of their ties with the offending lineage and call a

602 subcaste assembly to discuss the case and take
613 appropriate action. Until this was done, they
621 might not resume their ties or attend ceremonies of the offending lineage. The enangar thus formally represented the local subcaste group to the individual lineage.

613 Enangar played their most important role at
881 the initiation rites of the girls of a linked lineage.
836 Every ten to twelve years, each lineage held a
581 grand ceremony in its oldest ancestral house, at which all immature girls of the lineage were on one day ritually "married" by men of enangar groups. This ceremony, called talikettukalyanam (tali-tying marriage) (3) must be performed for each girl before puberty on pain of her excommunication from caste. Before it took place, elders of the subcaste assembly selected suitable young men of the enangar lineages as ritual bridegrooms for the girls. At the ceremony, each ritual bridegroom, in the company of representatives of every lineage in the kara, tied a gold ornament (tali) round the neck of his chosen "bride." After this each couple was secluded in a room of the ancestral house for a period of four days and nights during which, if the girl were old enough, cohabitation might take place. At the end of the four days, the couples were again led before the assembled company where each tore in two the loincloth worn by the girl during the period of seclusion. They were then
581 considered ritually divorced and had no further
613 practical obligations to each other. The girls
885 were now regarded as having attained the status of mature women, ready to bear children to perpetuate their lineage.

58/ perpetuate their lineage. Shortly before or after
6/3 puberty, they might, following this ceremony,
enter without religious rites into sexual liaisons
621 (called sambandham - "joining together") with
58/ one or more men of their own or an appropriate
6/3 higher subcaste, including, if they wished, the
man who had tied the tali. These men visited them in their natal houses at night. Similarly a Nayar man, (whether or not he had ever performed a tali-rite) might enter into relationships with any number of women of his own or an appropriate lower subcaste. These marital customs are further discussed below: here it is relevant to point only to the role of the enangar bridegroom. Since the enangar stand to the lineage as formal representatives of the local subcaste group, it seems appropriate to interpret the tali-rite as a ceremony at which the [46] subcaste group as a whole "married" the immature girls of the lineage as a whole, and ritually set free their procreative powers for the perpetuation of their lineage. It was also significant in that it appears that in general among the Nayars, enangar relationships between lineages (i.e., hereditary intergroup relationships) fulfilled the functions of integrating the total local community which in many unilineal systems (e.g., the patrilineal system of the lower castes) are fulfilled by interpersonal cognatic and affinal ties. This was possible, and necessary, because the marital tie was so weak among Nayars that all the interpersonal kinship ties between individuals of different lineages were also insufficiently stable to carry these functions of ritual and other social cooperation.

600 ritual and other social cooperation.

613
(2) Ritual Cooperation in the Lineage

783 In addition to the joint performance of the pre-puberty marriage rite, members of a lineage were united in ritual observances at a birth or death. On each of these occasions, all members fell for fourteen days into a condition of ritual pollution (pula) in which they might not touch, eat with, or enter into the houses of other members of their caste, enter the public temples or bathing pools of the village, enter their own ancestor shrines, sacred snake groves or other sacred places of their lineage, or take part in everyday social life. This period of ritual pollution resembled one of temporary excommunication from caste, the only difference being that those ostracized were regarded by others with special friendliness rather than hostility. It effectively set apart the lineage as a solidary group at times of crisis in its history, and gave recognition to their joint concern with increase or decrease in their membership.

613 Lineage members were also united in worship
794 of the lineage goddess or dharma devi ("goddess of moral law"). This goddess, named differently in different lineages, is a species of the common Nayar goddess Bhagavadi, and in this context was probably though of as a primeval ancestress of the lineage, though I lack data definitely to indicate this. Her idol was housed in a small shrine in the precincts of the oldest ancestral house, or sometimes in the courtyard of the village temple. She was believed capable of

613 794 inflicting or witholding sickness and all types of misfortune to the lineage, and, to ward off these, was propitiated with offerings of cooked food annually and in special emergencies on the advice of the astrologer as diviner. In particular, she[1] [842] had power to bless with fertility women of the lineage, and so was worshipped before a prepuberty marriage rite and also at the first menstruation ceremonies of a girl.

[778] Though not jointly owned by the lineage but rather by that branch of it which inherited the gardens on which they stood, the oldest ancestral house of the lineage, from which its forbears sprang, the original ancestor shrine in this house, and the sacred snake-grove in its [48] garden, were regarded with reverence by all lineage-members and stood as symbols of their unity. These are discussed below in connection with rites relating to the property-group.

613 (3) Fission and adoption in the Lineage

608 621 Since lineages were usually groups of actual and not putative matrilineal kin, it was inevitable that (since the birthrate is not uniform throughout a population) while some might remain stable in numbers over generations, others would expand greatly, and others would decrease and become in danger of extinction. When great growth in numbers in a lineage took place, some segments appear even traditionally to have hived off to other villages occupied by their own subcaste where kanam paddy lands and janmam garden lands were available. Such a segment, on moving to a new village, was adopted as retainers

[1] [the dhama devi, or lineage goddess---Analyst]

613 by the local janmi, was formally accepted into
608 the Nayar assembly of its new area, and was
621 accorded enangar relations with some of the lineages already present. If the incoming segment was small, it was customary for it to ally itself with one or other established lineages for the performance of the first tali-rite. This set up a bond of fictitious matrilineal kinship between the new segment and the old lineage, which must henceforth observe exogamy. Such fictitious matrilineal kinship, while serving to keep stable the size and number of exogamous groups in the village, was relevant only to inter-group relations in the microcosmic political life of [49] the village and not to matters which concerned only lineage members and had to do with their interpersonal family life. Thus, death and birth pollutions were not extended to include the incoming segment, which for several generations observed these in common with other segments of its parent-lineage, and with them also continued to worship the lineage goddess in their ancestral village. After some generations, however, the old matrilineal ties were forgotten or (if distance from the parent lineage was great) deliberately sundered, until in time even the rule of exogamy might unwittingly be broken and a division of the original lineage finally completed. If it had increased in numbers the new segment became a complete lineage in its own right; if not, it might gradually come to be regarded as a "real" genealogical branch of its host lineage in the new village.

Even within one village, a lineage might

613 become so large that over many generations
608 members of distant segments forgot that they
621 were matrilineal kin, ceased to observe joint
pollution, and finally broke the rule of exogamy. One case of this came to my notice in the Cochin village I studied. A man and woman of two lineages which were not enangar, and for some reason unknown to my informants, had never been known to intermarry, entered into a liaison. Certain elders of the village then began to look into the history of the two lineages and to wonder whether long ago, they might have been matrilineal kin or putative matrilineal kin by joint performance of the [50] tali-rite. As they were unable to foist their doubts on to younger members of the village, however, the liaison continued and thus what was probably an ancient tie of lineage exogamy was tacitly broken.

[597] Cases of extinction of a lineage were rare, since if one property group were without women in any generation it was customary to adopt one or more girls from collateral property groups of the same lineage and thus continue to perpetuate all the property-groups. In rare cases of the extinction of a lineage, its jenmam lands eschested to the king for reallocation to another lineage, and its kanam lands to the janmi. Today, the property of a group with no women is divided equally between surviving male members and inherited after their deaths by their wives and children.

613 (4) Succession and Segmentation in the Lineage

587 Among retainer Nayars whose lineages owned

613
881
no political office, the role of oldest man of the lineage was unimportant. His voice was heard respectfully in the village assembly, he might be regarded as an authority on traditional custom, and he was accorded special respect as an arbitrator in village disputes. He had, however, no sanctioned authority within the lineage and could be set politely aside by the heads of its other property-groups in crucial matters affecting joint action by the group. Overall headship in the lineage became important only for desavaris, chiefs and royalty where political office was vested in the oldest man, [51] irrespective of branch. Even here, however, authority inhered chiefly in the political office and could be exercised (in a political sense) only over members of lower subcastes and (in a kinship sense) over members of the office-bearer's own property-group. A king, chief or village headman had no rights to interfere in the management of other property-groups of his own lineage, each of which had its separate karanavan as legal guardian of its members. Indeed in the case of most royal and chiefly lineages, the senior office-bearer had no rights to management even in the property-group into which he was born: he was set apart on a separate landed estate and headship of his property-group passed to the next younger man. The dimension of authority, like that of economic cooperation, was therefore absent from the lineage and inhered instead in the hierarchy of political offices on the one hand, and in individual property-groups on the other.

613 Within each lineage, even today when it may

6.13 comprise ten to twenty property-groups, exact genealogical relationships, and the order of segmentation of the several branches, are usually though not invariably known by elders. Members of very distantly related segments of the same lineage may however gradually cease to use kinship terms for each other and in any case tend to feel less strong emotional ties for each other than do members of more recently partitioned segments. These are of course closest [52] between property groups which have recently partitioned, those whose recent ancestresses were all born in one house. The order of segmentation of the lineage is also recognized in that should a property-group be allowed to die out, its property customarily reverts in equal shares to segments of the same order as itself - those which formed one unit with it before the most recent partition - rather than to the lineage as a whole.

But in other ways, the order of segmentation in a lineage is unimportant for the structuring of social relations. Segments intermediate between the property-group and the lineage have no special property, activities or ceremonies, and no headmen and their members never meet to the exclusion of other lineage members. Neither do whole intermediate segments oppose
[627] each other in quarrels between their individual members. These remain restricted to the property-groups of the disputants and are normally settled voluntarily through appeal to some popular arbitrator of the village or, if they become serious, are forcibly settled by intervention of the assembly.

613 the assembly.

Though the order of segmentation is known in the taravad and is relevant to reversion of property, to the emotional strength of matrilineal ties, and to ultimate division of the group into new exogamous taravads, the Nayars cannot therefore be said to have a lineage in the strict British sense of a system in which "minimal groups of unilineal kin combine into larger groups in contrast to [53] other groups of like nature which in turn combine until a maximal lineage or clan is formed as a capstone to the whole structure." (4) However, since it does not appear certain that matrilineal lineages of this type exist anywhere, yet since the term "matrilineage" is in current use to describe corporate groups of a matrilineal society in which the order of segmentation is known, I use this word to describe corporate groups of a matrilineal society in which the order of segmentation is known, I use this word to describe the taravad.

421 V The Traditional Kinship System

(1) The Property-Group

(a) The Corporate Character of the Group

A traditional property-group was a small segment of the lineage, usually comprising a group of brothers and sisters by the same mother, and the children and daughters' children of the sisters. This group was the joint property-owning unit: its members, male and female, were from birth equal copartners in the buildings, gardens, kanam and janmam lands, movables, ritual objects and serfs owned by the group. The group

592 602 from sight behind a pillar, holding his hand before his mouth lest his breath should reach the hearer. [69] With younger mother's brothers more intimately responsible for his education, a youth's etiquette is necessarily relaxed, but he observes the greatest possible formal respect before them. A similar etiquette is preserved before older brothers and classificatory brothers: after puberty these never joke, sit or chew betal and areca nuts together. A junior man never sits before his senior except at mealtimes when all men may sit in the dining hall in order of age, served by women of the group who eat later in company in the kitchen. In general, age overrides generation and also segment in the formal structuring of relationships between men of a property-group: mother's mother's brother is accorded the same etiquette as mother's brother, and classificatory older brother as older brother. Emotionally, however, there tends to be less acrimony and more tenderness, as might be expected, between alternate than between proximal generations; there is also a strong tendency for own siblings to support each other against classificatory siblings. 613 593 This is part of the process of clear-cut segmentation in the lineage along lines descending through sisters: it culminates regularly in quarrels between classificatory brothers and division of property between the segments. This process of segmentation throughout the whole lineage derives from the paramount strength of the mother-child bond, the key-pin of the kinship system. For both men and women,

613 593 no other personal relationship can override this: both sexes have their permanent home with the mother throughout her life and accord her unfailing [70] reverence and affection. From this bond issues the unity of the sibling group, (9) particularly the strong tie between brother and sister which emotionally reflects the dependence of men on their mothers. With the elder sister as with the mother a man has an intimate relationship of reverence mingled with easy familiarity: the two may sit together and discuss affairs of their kin-group, and the sister early accords her brother the right to discipline her children. With her elder brother, as with her maternal uncle, after her puberty, a woman must maintain a formal etiquette of partial avoidance: she may not sit before him speak to him unasked, or be alone in a room or a house with him. Only if she gravely offends against traditional morality, he may traditionally beat her even after puberty, for a Nayar woman owes the same obedience to all older matrilineal kinsmen as a collectivity as does a woman of the patrilineal castes to her father and later her
[684] husband. Incest with the younger sister or classificatory sister or sister's daughter is a most heinous crime, formerly punishable by death, and in modern times by total ostracism by the caste and lineage. It does however occasionally take place and is evidently recognized as a temptation under matrilocal residence, hence the formal etiquette imposed to counter it.

592 In a traditional ṭaravad, therefore, women form the core of the group: men stand on the

584 outside on the verandah before he comes to visit
595 her.

These statements however again require some modification in the case of hypergamous unions. In recent years at all events, a powerful Nambudiri or royal landowner might occasionally force his attentions on a Nayar woman, whose family would be unlikely to oppose him. In two cases I even heard of Nambudiris who had succeeded in carrying on a liaison with a dead Nayar wife's younger sister, though this is contrary to Nayar rules of mating and led to unhappiness and strong covert [77] disapproval among the woman's kinsmen. In general, however, the traditional picture of Nayar marriage is one in which women voluntarily seek the favours of men: rape, for example, is a crime
[684] apparently unheard of among them. Certainly, cases are recorded of the dismissal of a higher caste man by a Nayar woman.

613 Combined polyandrous and polygynous mating
595 had a function in maintaining the unity of the
592 lineage. It seems that in every matrilineal system one basic conflict is inherent, namely the conflict between a man's ties to his natal kin on the one hand and to his kin by marriage and procreation on the other. In the Nayar system in this area, the conflict was resolved by almost completely eliminating the claims of the father and his kin. Polyandry and polygyny, combined, minimized the rights of the husband and father, and dispersed their roles between a number of men. This preserved the unity of the lineage, by preventing the close attachment of men to

613 their children in other lineages. The separation
592 of the ritual marriage (the tali-rite) from
595 actual cohabitation (sambandham, initiated without
religious rites) underlined the necessity to
the lineage of marriage and procreation, and
the exclusion of the individual husband and father
from a legally and socially significant role
in relation to it.

594 It is clear therefore that whatever name we
592 give to the traditional marital relationship
566 among Nayars, the elementary family, contrary
to the view of Murdock (11), did not exist as an
economic, legal or ceremonial unit among them.
This circumstance, which is perhaps unique in
the world, was evidently made possible by their
specialized role as one caste group in a larger
society in which, in general, marriage and the
elementary family were institutionalized. First,
the Nayar system could probably not have come
about in any but a leisure class supported by
the labour of tenants and serfs. Because of
this, young Nayar men need give economic [78]
support neither to their wives nor to their sisters.
Women were the people who sat at home
on the land; their maintenance was assured by
the payment of rents from low caste tenants
and the labour of serfs, and it was necessary to
have only one old man living with them to manage
701 their financial affairs. The feudal relationships
595 of the caste system thus freed all able-bodied
men for their occupation as a mobile militia.
In explaining their peculiar marriage relationships,
I am inclined to emphasize the military
organization even more than the **status of** Nayars

601 (m. sp.). Except in a few "modern" marriages men do not address the wife's kin by terms, but instead use the name and caste title: many informants said they would not use terms for the wife's kinsfolk because they did not feel that the were kin - a traditional attitude. The main modern change therefore is the extension of primarily matrilineal terms to parallel kin of the father's matrilineal terms to parallel kin of the father's matrilineal group and their spouses. As it stands today, the terminological system thus faithfully reflects an extreme matrilineal system which has recently shifted towards bilaterality. [88]

613 VI. The Structure of the Royal Lineages

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423 We saw that the traditional property-group of retainer Nayars divided into segments when mal members of the mother's generation were all dead, and that correspondingly the lineages of retainer Nayars went through a gradual process of fission between their major segments every [427] few generations. This state of affairs was in harmony with the relatively temporary relationship of retainer Nayars to the land, as kanam tenants, since kanam tenure permitted segments of a tarayas to hive off at intervals with ease.

This was not the case with the property-groups of royal and naduvari lineages, which were held together for longer periods by their joint ownership of extensive jenmam lands and by their political offices. These royal and chiefly taravads in most cases developed a somewhat different structure which enabled them to cohere for

613 longer periods.

644 In all the royal and chiefly lineages, political
423 office was normally held by the eldest member irrespective of branch. In several of these lineages, however, including Calicult, Walluvanad and Kolattiri, there existed also separate office subordinate to that of the kind. In Calicut, the five oldest men of the Zamorin's lineage, irrespective of branch, held five offices or sthanams (occupant = sthani), each with a landed estate, separately from the lands jointly owned by each property-group of the lineage. The eldest sthani was the Zamorin who ruled at Calicut. The second was called Eralpad: he was the naduvari of Ernad, the oldest of the Zamorin's nads from which his forbears originally sprang. To prevent rivalry with the [89] king, the second sthani was forbidden during his tenure of office to cross over into the Calicut nad until the Zamorin died and he was summoned to perform the funeral rites and receive the crown. The third sthani, the Munalpac, was commander-in-chief of the Zamorin's army: his estate was in Calicut but he travelled throughout the kingdom. The two youngest sthanis held no political office but lived as desavaris or independent landlords in separate villages of the kingdom. When the Zamorin or any of the other sthanis died, those below him in rank moved up one place, and the next eldest man was appointed as the fifth sthani.

From the 14th century until 1792, the Zamorin's lineage was able to cohere as a single property-group without partition between its

613 segments lifted out of their group on to separat
644 estates. The jointly owned land of the royal lin-
423 eage, in Ernaq, was managed by the sixth man
karanavan after the fashion of an ordinary Na-
[90] yar property-group. As among Nayars, younger men of the lineage were trained as soldiers and fought in the Raja's wars.

However, it also happened that during these centuries, the Zamorin's lineage did not greatl increase in numbers. Indeed, in the 18th century it was obliged to save itself from extinction by adopting three girls from the royal lineage o Nileswaram in South Canara, north of Kerala. In 1792, the Zamorin was conquered by the British and, along with other rulers of what becam Malabar District, retired from political office as the head of a large landowning lineage. The British to compensate the royal lineages gave them ~~political pensions~~, payable in cash sums annually to each male and female. Shortly afterwards, the Zamorin's [90] lineage began to increase in size, and by the mid-nineteenth century had partitioned into three property-groups, Pudiya (New) Tavari which lives in a village in the modern Calicut division of Malabar District, Padinyare (West) Tavari, also in Calicut, and Kirakke (East) Tavari in Ernad Division. Pudiya Tavari has this century partitioned into thre new property-groups. The extensive lands of each group are managed by their separate karanavans. The five sthanams with their landed estates are still occupied by the five eldest members of the lineage, who in addition receive their political pensions independently of the rest

613 644 423 The whole exogamous lineage now has over 300 members. This growth in numbers in the British period is part of the general increase in population all over Kerala; it is paralleled in many other royal and commoner lineages.

613 644 593 Within each property-group of the Zamorin's lineage, residential and economic arrangements differ somewhat from those of retainers. We may take as an example Kirakke tavari in Ernad division. This property-group contains 172 members and is the largest of the property-groups. It has a time-depth of eight generations. Most of the members live in a single [344] kovilagam (palace) in Kottakkal village. The palace is a vast block of buildings with a fort at each corner and is surrounded by a moat. Within its precincts are, apart from the residential buildings, a temple, an elementary school and a high school for children of the lineage and the Nayar children of princes, and four bathing pools. The palace has a central kitchen where food is cooked for all members, and two main wings to house men and women [91] respectively. There is separate accommodation for the Nambudiri Brahman husbands of the women, who live uxorilocally at the expense of the palace. Each prince, and each princess with her small children, has a separate suite of two rooms. Children remain with their mothers in the women's quarters until the age of 15 when the boys move into separate rooms in the men's quarters and are prohibited from visiting the women. Brother-sister avoidance is strict. If a man wishes to speak to his mother or an

613 644 593 elder sister or classificatory sister he must send a messenger to call her into the common hall. After the age of 15 he may not speak to a younger sister or classificatory sister, and may see them only in the distance. Contact between children and their Nambudiri fathers, as between princes and their Nambudiri brothers-in-law, is also restricted: the Nambudiris live and eat separately from the princes, served by their own Brahman servants. It is obvious that such restrictions on social relations within the palace militate against affinal and intertavari quarrels, as well as against incest.

613 644 361 427 On all four sides of the palace are roads leading into the village. This is crowded with the houses of Nayar retainers, each one of which is in some way connected with the palace, and leases kanam lands from it. Many dwelling-groups are those of the princes' Nayar wives and children, chiefly of the Pariccha Menon subcaste; their forbears formed the private army of the Zamorin in traditional times. Other somewhat poorer households belong to the Agattu Charna and Pallichan subcastes; both men and women work in the place, since each adult member living in it employs two Nayar servants of his or her own sex to do housework and act as messengers. The servants are still paid daily in rice.

613 644 423 [92] The lands of the kovilagam are held in the name of the eldest woman, but are managed by the karanavan who also receives and distributes the pensions of his group in amounts which differ according to age-rank in the group. This

613 is a recent practice which grew out of the de-
644 mands for separate payments of those princes
423 who had left the palace to find modern work outside. Until about ten years ago, the karanavan completely controlled the group's finances and paid maintenance in kind to its members, even to toilet requisites such as oil for bathing and ash for cleaning the teeth. Since they began to receive allowances in cash, several princes have acquired private land and built small house for their wives and children, where a very few of them now live and eat, despite caste rules against interdining with lower caste kinsfolk. In addition some princes now work in government service or in one of the coast towns or in one of the large cities of India. They return to the palace only for vacations and ceremonies. The lands of the major royal property-groups of Malabar are at present declared impartible by law, but there is dissatisfaction with this law among their younger members. Individual partition of property, in accordance with the new Nayar inheritance laws to be explained below, is expected to take place in most palaces within the next few years, and has already been applied for in some. The royal lineages are in fact now breaking down in precisely the same manner as are retainer Nayar taravads.

It is clear, however, that royal property-groups were traditionally able to comprise more segments and cohere for longer periods than could retainer groups. The differences in structure which made this possible were: 1) the landed estates which were large enough to [93]

613 support many members and, together with the
644 political office, had a sentimental value for
423 them; 2) sthanams, which lifted the five oldest men out of the factionalism of their property-groups; 3) the spacious construction of palaces with privacy for each woman and her descendants, each adult man, and each visiting Nambudiri husband; 4) the very rigid rules of etiquette and avoidance which discouraged quarrels between men and incest between men and women; 5) the ability of the palace to employ separate servants for each adult; and 6) the peculiar residence-arrangements in royal and a few chiefly lineages, which, together with the universal practice of hypergamy, gave the property-group some of the features of a matriclan (14) and enabled it to live for generations on the same site. The existence of Nambudiri Brahmans as a leisure class of ritual specialists, many of whom were free to leave their own estates and live as drones (or "as breeding bulls", as one Calicut prince remarked) in the palaces, was crucial to this, as was the ability of the royal lineage, because of the concentration of wealth and political power in its hands, to maintain a horde of retainer lineages at its doorstep to provide mistresses for the princes and a bodyguard for the king.

613 In spite of these special devices, royal and
644 chiefly lineages did, even traditionally, divide into separate property-groups when their numbers became unwieldy. Unfortunately I lack genealogies to show whether, as in retainer lineages, this regularly occurred at a particular

613 644 point in their development. There is plenty of historical evidence, however, to show that they did so. In many cases, especially of the smaller Rajas and the chiefs, the kingdom or chiefdom was also divided between the segments at some point after their own private estates had been partioned.

613 644 631 [94] Reference to Map[1] helps to clarify this statement. Nads I and II (Kolattunad and Arikkal) were once united under the Kolattiri Rajas, but nad II early broke away as a small independent chiefdom ruled by a segment of the lineage which had been converted to Islam by the Arabs. Nad I, which remained the kingdom of Kolattiri, was subdivided into smaller nads ruled by Samantan naduvaris. There are today several lineages of these, but Innes reports that they have all split off from one of two original lineages. Nad II was similarly ruled by a high class Nayar chieftain lineage (14) which at various times was feudatory to Kolattiri. This lineage divided into several branches each of which took as portion of the nad and ruled it independently. Nad IV was also once ruled by a single naduvari lineage as one property-group (Mithangath Kovilagath Thottoli), as feudatory of Kolattiri. In 1766, the group partitioned its properties between its five segments, but retained the office of naduvari, and also a second athānam, for the first and second man of the whole lineage.

The Kurumbranad Rajas, (nad X), like the Kolattiri Rajas, are said to be one of the oldest ruling families of Kerala and to have received their nad from the last of the Perumals. The

[1] [See p. 105, category 116 -- Analyst]

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The area ruled by the Kurumbranad Rajas is thought to have once extended as far south as nad XI, where it bordered on the Zamorin's territory, and as far north as nads IV and VI. Nad IX was formerly ruled by the Rajas of Kollam, who are thought to have been an independent segment of the Kurumbranad family. The Kollam Rajas were conquered and expelled by the Zamorins.

The Kottayam Rajas, who ruled nads VII and XXX, and were in possession of nad XI for a short time before the British took over, are said by some informants to have once formed one lineage with the Kurumbranad Rajas, (with whom Innes too reports that they were "closely related".) This is likely, since the two lineages acknowledge each other to be Kshattriyas, but will not intermarry. Innes also reports that nad XXX (a mountainous, sparsely populated area) was conquered by Kottayam and Kurumbranad together and later divided between them. Before the British came, the Kottayam lineage redivided and one property-group, Parassi, became independent chieftains over part of nad VI. When the Muslims invaded from Mysore the main branch of the Kottayam family fled temporarily to Travancore and in their absence Parassi became rulers of nads VI and XXX. They later opposed the British settlement of Malabar and were therefore deposed and not given a pension. Parassi and Kottayam (who returned) are still independent lineages but do not yet intermarry. The Payyormala Nayar chieftains of nad VIII who ruled as feudatories

613 of Kurumbranad, were also once one lineage,
644 which divided its rule and its lands between
631 three segments. This nad, like nads X and XI was for a short time conquered by the Zamorin, and its rulers, along with the Kurumbranad Rajas, became his feudatories.

The Kadattunad Rajas of nad VII are not one of the oldest lineages of Kerala and are not a segment of one of the neighbouring lineages. Krishna Iyer reports (15) that [96] Kadattunad was once a branch of the Porlattiri royal lineage which once ruled nad XII. The Porlattiri lineage was the first to be dispossessed by the Zamorin and its members are said to have fled north and sought refuge with the Kolattiri lineage. Innes says that the Kadattunad lineage sprang from the union of a Kolattiri woman with a Porlattiri man, but our informants in North Malabar thought that Kadattunad are descended from a Kolattiri man who gave this nad to his Porlattiri wife and children, in accordance with a common North Malabar custom.

The Pulavayi Nayar chieftains of nad XIV were once independent rulers in their jungly nad, but became nominal feudatories of the Zamorin. Their lineage and rule were also divided into several branches. Nads XIII and XV were once united under the Parappu royal lineage, which divided its nad between two branches, both of which were early overrun by the Zamorin. The Beyport Rajas' lineage, which remained as a feudatory of the Zamorin and is still extant, is a branch of the Parappu lineage. Nads XXIII and XXIV were similarly once one with nad XXV

613 under the Palghat Rajas, but the Zamorin drove
644 a wedge into their territory in the 18th century
631 and took nad XXV. The other two nads were
divided between two branches of the Palghat lineage.

Nad XXVIII was formerly ruled by the Chavakkad Rajas, whose lineage became a feudatory of Cochin. The lineage divided into four tavaris, which quarreled with each other for political power. One of these branches, known as the Rajas of Punnattur, finally appealed to the Zamorin for [97] support against the other three, which were supported by Cochin. The Zamorin came to their help, overran the whole nad, and made its rulers feudatory to himself.

The Vellatiri Rajas, who ruled nad XIX and formerly nads XX and XXI as the kingdom of Walluvanad, remained a small lineage and, like the Zamorins, did not partition until the British began to rule. Their numbers then increased and they are now divided into four palaces.

Since the Zamorin's lineage, which maintained its kingdom intact, was one which happened not to increase in numbers or divided its property-group over four centuries, it might be thought tempting to argue that the cohesion of each kingdom traditionally depended on the cohesion of its royal lineage.

However, we must be clear in recognizing that the cohesion and expansion of the Zamorin's kingdom, and to a lesser extent of that of Cochin, and later of Travancore, depended on factors other than the structure of their royal lineages. Chief of these factors were, it seems likely,

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the expansion of overseas' trade with the Arabs and later, the Europeans, from the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries; the developments of better means of communication in the larger kingdoms of the plains, where this was not too difficult; some ammassing of wealth in the hands of rulers; and leading from this, their ability to organize larger armies which (especially after the adoption of gun-warfare) permitted them to conquer neighbouring weaker nads. The persistence of these larger units seems to have depended on the strength of their new political institutions, chiefly [98] the militia and the central courts of justice, as well as on a widening of the field of social relations of the "good" castes who controlled the administration.

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Along with this went a very slow process of social mobility in the upper reaches of the society. The caste system of rulers, chiefs, village headmen and retainers was not entirely stationary: retainer-lineages which had distinguished themselves in war were sometimes appointed as desavaris and gradually changed their ritual rank, and it was possible for a desavari lineage to increase in wealth and be made a naduvari lineage, or for a small naduvari lineage to increase in wealth (as did the Zamorins), expand its territory, and call itself a royal lineage, claiming the rank of Kshattriyas. This process took some time, indeed; it was not until the eighteenth century that the Zamorin's lineage, after going through a ceremony in which its members passed through the body of a golden cow, were able to claim that

613 they had been reborn as Kshattriyas, and to
644 shake off their marital ties with feudatory lin-
631 eages and marry their women only to Nambu-
565 diris. The same process went on in other parts of Kerala; it is even whispered by some in North Malabar that the Kadattunad lineage started out as a high class Nayar taravad with the title of Adiodi and, through outstanding military services and marriage alliances with Kolattiri, gradually established itself first as naduvaris and later as an independent royal lineage.

613 The size and cohesion of a kingdom thus de-
644 pended not on kinship factors but on political
631 and economic factors such [99] as trade, eco-
601 nomic specialization and the development of specialized political institutions. When their kingdoms and private estates became large, the kinship systems of the royal lineages adapted themselves to this change: they modified their residence-patterns, practised exclusively hypergamous marriage, and developed the institution of athanams. It is arguable that had their economy and political institutions developed still further before the British came, they would have been obliged to change their kinship system still more, for the unwieldy structure of matrilineal lineages, with segments periodically hiving off and claiming themselves independent, certainly made it difficult to establish a stable
613 system of succession to the crown. The history
644 of the Cochin lineage, which had two athanams
631 and in the fifteenth century partitioned into five property-groups, was from 1510 to 1792 one of perpetual dissension between the heads of

613 property-groups. These in turn scrambled for
644 the crown and in turn allied themselves with the
631 Zamorins, the Portuguese and the Travancore Rajas to help them to establish their claims. Despite periodic total conquest by one or other neighbouring ruler, however, the kingdom was never divided between its segments as were many of the smaller chiefdoms, I think because, like Calicut and Walluvanad, it had developed trade and centralized political institutions which would not permit of its reversion to smaller units. Whether, had their kingdoms grown much larger the rulers would have been obliged to abandon the matrilineal system, is a question which cannot be answered out of the data available. [100]

At all events it is clear that despite its militia and relatively centralized administration, the whole political structure of the central area, as well as the kinship system of its rulers, depended for its persistence on a relatively stationary or only very gradually changing economy which would permit the perpetuation of hereditary political offices. For the administration, managed by the "good" upper castes, was built up round a network of kinship ties. Nambudiris fathered the Rajas and sporadically, the high caste population at large; the Rajas fathered the chieftains, and the chieftains the desavaris; while the whole retainer Nayar population, despite its division into karas, villages, and lineages linked in perpetual affinal kinship, was also united throughout the kingdom by the practice of sexual unions between the mobile

613 soldiers and Nayar women stationary in their
644 villages. It was left to the British, with their
631 introduction of a new highly specialized expanding economy with mechanized industry, to crack the system apart. This was essentially a small-scale feudal system - (the Zamorin's kingdom, at the height of its power, cannot have had more than 500,000 inhabitants) - and it depended on the existence of a fairly stable economy with the village as the basic social unit, self-sufficient for food. [101]

NOTES

162 (1) In 1931 the matrilineal castes numbered
[611] roughly one-fifth of the total population.

(2) Muslims in 1931 numbered about 15% of the total population, being concentrated chiefly in the south of Malabar District. The first converstions to Islam were probably carried out in the ninth century by Arab traders who visited the coast. This community, called the Mappillas, increased greatly after the fourteenth century, but particularly during the Muslim invasions from Mysore in the 1760's. The Muslims of North Malabar District follow matrilineal descent with matrilocal residence; those of other
[113] areas follow patriliny. For a brief account of North Malabar Muslim kinship see Gough, "Incest Prohibitions and Rules of Exogamy in three matrilineal groups of the Malabar Coast", in Int. Archives of Ethnography, June 1952.

The Christians of Kerala numbered about 20% of the population in 1931. The Syrian Christians, 113 1921), p. 241.

(11) A. I. Richards, Some Types of Family Structure amongst the Central Bantu, in African Systems of Kinship and Marriage (Radcliffe-Brown and Forde, 1950).

582 (12) Matrilateral cross cousin marriage is preferred to patrilateral, since it harmonizes the conjugal interests of a man and his sister's son, the most rivalrous relationship between men. It is also of course possible with hypergamous unions, whereas patrilateral cross cousins unions are not. In one Cochin village 7.2% of living Nayar women had married the father's own or classificatory maternal nephew; 1.6% had married the own or classificatory mother's brother's son. [103] Taking the women of six lineages over five generations, 13.9% of marriages were to the father's nephew, 9.0% to the uncle's son. In Wạlluvanad division, South Malabar, of the women of nine lineages over five generations, 11.2% had married the father's nephew, 4.7% the uncle's son (own or classificatory).

613 573 (13) In Murdock's sense of a matrilineal, matrilocal unit with the husbands of the women as permanent residents. However, in a true matriclan adult male members of the matrilineage or matrisib would be living away with their wives whereas in the royal lineages princes lived at home and merely visited their wives nearby. In most naduvari and all lower subcaste lineages, women were visited only occasionally by their Nambudiri lovers who lived in their own households.

6/3 (14) Called Randatara Acchanmar, (lit. "Fathers over the two taras",) The nad was composed of two taras, and the chieftain taravad had the title of acchan, common in North Malabar.

(15) The Zamorins of Calicut, p.1.

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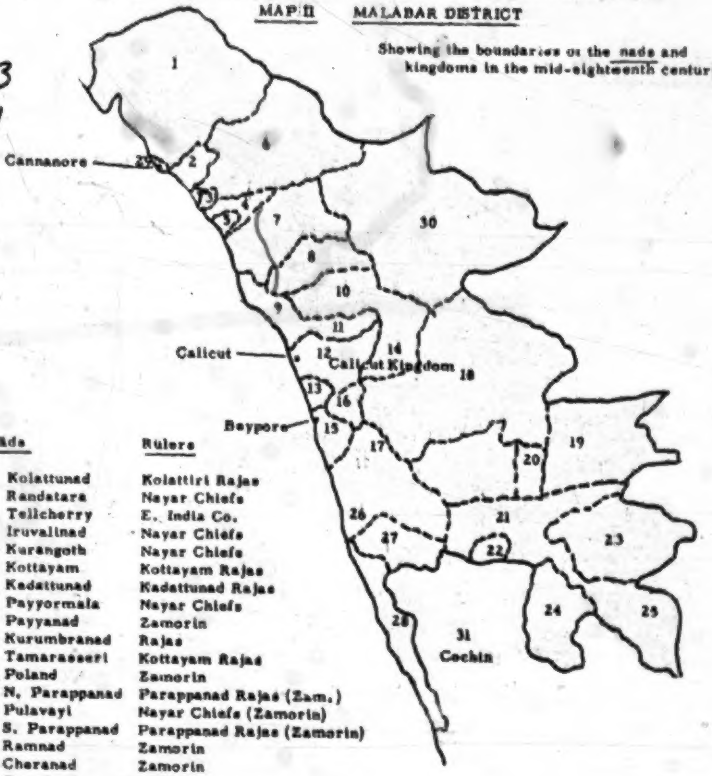
MAP II MALABAR DISTRICT

Showing the boundaries of the *nads* and
kingdoms in the mid-eighteenth century.


Cannanore
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Nada	Rulers
1 Kolattunad	Kolattiri Rajas
2 Randatara	Nayar Chiefs
3 Tellicherry	E. India Co.
4 Iruvalinad	Nayar Chiefs
5 Kurangoth	Nayar Chiefs
6 Kottayam	Kottayam Rajas
7 Kadattunad	Kadattunad Rajas
8 Payyormala	Nayar Chiefs
9 Payyanad	Zamorin
10 Kurumbranad	Rajas
11 Tamarasseri	Kottayam Rajas
12 Poland	Zamorin
13 N. Parappanad	Parappanad Rajas (Zam.)
14 Pulavayi	Nayar Chiefs (Zamorin)
15 S. Parappanad	Parappanad Rajas (Zamorin)
16 Ramnad	Zamorin
17 Cheranad	Zamorin
18 Ernad	Zamorin
19 Walluvanad	Walluvanad Rajas
20 Walluvanad	Zamorin
21 Nedunganad	Zamorin
22 Kavalappara	Nayar Chiefs
23 Vadamalappuram	Palghat Rajas
24 Temmalapuram	Palghat Rajas
25 Naduvattam	Zamorin
26 Bettatnad	Bettem Rajas (Zamorin)

Nada	Rulers
27 Kutnad	Zamorin
28 Chavakkad	Chavakkad Rajas (Zamorin)
29 Arikkal	Arikkal Rajas
30 Wynaad	Kottayam Rajas
31 Cochin	Cochin Rajas

Caste and Territorial Divisions

THE HIGH CASTES

564 *The Nambudiri Brahmans* Throughout Kerala the Nambudiri Brahmans
were the highest Hindu caste and the ritual and scholastic leaders.
[162] Today they form one hundredth of the population (Censuses of
Madras, Cochin, and Travancore, 1931). Carriers of the Sanskrit language
[174] and of ancient Vedic culture, they are thought to have entered
Malabar from the eastern plateau sometime after the fall of the Chera
564 kingdom (Logan, 1951, I: 121, 243; Ayyar, 1938: 47). Most Nambudiris
were landlords of substance, but they included a number of
463 ranked occupational sub-castes of varying wealth. The greater landlords
were managers of large temples, promulgators of religious law,
legal advisers of the kings, priests of public sacrifices, or philosophers
and Vedic scholars. The lower sub-castes, whose members owned
smaller estates, included temple priests, physicians, and household
priests and professional cooks who officiated at ceremonies in the
Nayar castes.

564 The Nambudiris ranked ritually above the kings and were to some
extent above and outside the political systems of the kingdoms. Alone
of all the castes, they moved unmolested between enemy kingdoms.
They held ceremonies attended by their caste fellows from all parts
of Kerala and carried on their system of intra-caste administration
independently of the administration of justice within the kingdoms.
For the latter purpose they divided Kerala into *gramams* (caste areas)
(Logan, 1951, I: 120). Over the whole region a dignitary called the
Aravancheri Tamburakkal, who lived in the Calicut kingdom, was universally
acknowledged as the ritual and administrative leader of the
Nambudiris (Buchanan, 1807: 423–426; Ayyar, 1938: 23). He held the
right to install the kings of both Calicut and Cochin, even though
these rulers were traditionally at enmity. The field of social relations
of the Nambudiris was thus the whole of Kerala and they played a
[611] role not dissimilar to that of the medieval Catholic church. Descent
among the Nambudiris was patrilineal.

564 *The High-Caste Nayars* Below the Nambudiri Brahmans in ritual
● 613 rank came the royal *matrilineages* of the several kingdoms. Those in
635 Central Kerala were Calicut, Walluvanad, Palghat, and Cochin. Although
of Nayar origin, each of these lineages considered itself superior
in ritual rank to the Nayar subjects within its kingdom. Between
kingdoms, royal lineages disputed for rank and would not intermarry.
Although exogamous, therefore, each royal lineage considered

itself a separate caste. The Cochin lineage claimed descent from the 564
Perumals and ranked as Kshattriyas, the second of the four divisions of 613
all-India Hindu society. The Walluvanad, Palghat, and Calicut lineages, 635
once vassals of the Perumals, were not strictly recognized as Kshattriyas in Brahmin theory and held the title of Samantans. Normally, the oldest man in each royal lineage held the kingship and administered customary law with assistance from Brahman advisers.

Each kingdom was divided into *nāds* (chiefdoms or districts). In 634
the Zamorin's kingdom at the height of its power some of these chief-
doms had once been independent small kingdoms. They were con- 613
quered by Calicut in the late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. 554
They continued to be ruled by their traditional monarchs, who paid tribute to Calicut. Among them were the chiefdoms of Beypore, Chaliyam, Parappanad, Bettem, and Punnattur. Each of these ruling lineages, although feudatory, retained a higher ritual rank than the Zamorin by virtue of its more ancient tradition of government. Similarly, some chiefdoms of the Cochin kingdom were governed by conquered feudatory rulers of higher ritual rank than the royal lineage. The small kingdoms of Walluvanad and Palghat, however, had no feudatories of higher rank than their royal lineages.

The other chiefdoms of a kingdom were ruled by hereditary Nayar chiefs (*nāduvaḻis*) originally appointed by the king, and these chiefs had more restricted powers than the feudatory monarchs. Most of them held the title of Samantan, but all were considered of lower ritual rank than their royal lineages. The Zamorin's kingdom (the largest) appears to have had twenty-eight such district chiefs in the
fifteenth century. Each chiefly lineage, like each royal lineage, tended [564]
to regard itself as a separate caste acknowledging no peers. [613]

Each chiefdom was divided into *dēsams* or villages. A village seems 634
to have covered anything from one to four square miles, comprising 621
both dry garden land and flats of alluvial rice land. Most of the land 471
in each village was normally owned by one landlord family of higher ritual rank than the other occupants.

In some villages the land was owned by a Nambudiri patrilineal 621
extended family, whose large house occupied a central position. In 564
others it was owned by one or other branch of the royal lineage as 471
part of the royal domain. There would then be a palace in the village
and the senior prince of the household would act as village headman. 613
In other villages the land was owned by the chiefly matrilineage of [622]
the district, whether this lineage were of feudatory royal rank or of vassal Samantan rank. Again in this case the chiefly family would live

621 in a small palace and the head of it would fulfil the roles both of
564 chief and of village headman. In other villages the land formed part
471 of the estate of some large temple. These estates, called *sankētams,*
●613 were managed by assemblies of Nambudiris who held complete judicial rights over the lower-caste population. Finally, in yet other vil-
[622] lages the land was owned by the matrilineage of a hereditary Nayar village headman (*dēsavari*) originally appointed by the king or by the chief of the district. The Nayar village headmen were drawn from castes ritually lower than those of their district chiefs. In Walluvaned and Calicut village headmen were usually drawn from the Kiriattil Nayar caste. The corresponding caste in Cochin was called Vellayma Nayars.

The landowning families in all of these villages were called *jenmis.* The eldest man of the extended family, whether patrilineal or matrilineal, had legal guardianship of his own family and, in another sense, of the village lands and inhabitants. He sanctioned marriages in all the castes, managed the land devoted to village temples, and paid the temple servants from its produce. A landlord family could not sell its land without the consent of the king and it usually remained on its site over many generations.

621 Villages were classifiable therefore as Brahman, temple, royal,
564 chiefly, and Nayar headmen's villages. In some areas a group of villages of the same type might be adjacent to one another. In each village, subordinate to the landlord in ritual rank and administrative
[178] power, lived members of one or other caste of Nayar retainers or vassals. In modern times these castes have tended to combine as a single caste of "high-class Nayars," so that their former roles are difficult to determine. So far as I could discover they were as follows.

564 First, a caste called Kiriattil Nayars in Calicut and Vellayma Nayars
[622] in Cochin. Most village headmen's lineages were originally drawn from this caste, but after they had assumed office these lineages iso-
[613] lated themselves as a separate sub-caste of higher rank than ordinary Kiriattils. Ordinary Kiriattils appear to have been usually retainers in villages commanded by Nayar village headmen.

Second, a caste called Purattu Charna Nayars ("outdoor retainers") in Calicut. Its members usually lived in villages owned by a district
[701] chief or by the royal lineage. A special, higher-ranking subdivision of the caste called Pariccha Menons ("leaders of the shield") formed the Zamorin's private army and lived on royal land near Calicut.

Third, a caste called Agattu Charna Nayars ("indoor retainers") in Calicut. They also seem to have lived mainly in royal or chiefly vil-

lages. The men were often clerks in the palaces. In Cochin, castes 564
two and three were amalgamated and were called Swarupattil Sudra
Nayars or "palace servants."

Fourth, a caste called Pallichan Nayars, both in Calicut and Cochin. Its members also were vassals in the villages of royalty, chiefs, and of the greater Brahmans. The men were often palanquin bearers as well as soldiers.

Fifth, a caste called Sudra Nayars in Calicut and Illath ("Brahman house") Sudras in Cochin. The members lived in villages owned by Brahman families or on the estates of Brahmanical temples.

The mutual ritual ranking of these five castes seems to have varied 564
in different districts. In some districts they ranked in the order given, 554
and men of a higher caste might marry women of a lower caste;
the reverse was in theory forbidden. In other districts the castes seem
to have disputed for precedence and not to have regularly intermar-
ried. In most areas the five castes occupied different villages or dif- [628]
ferent sections of large villages, seem to have had little communica-
tion in peacetime, and did not normally interdine. In war, however, [726]
soldiers of these different castes interdined freely and spent the night
in each others' homes. It is possible that sexual restrictions between
these castes were also relaxed in war, but this point is uncertain.

In each village there were normally some four to seven matrilineages 621
of the appropriate retainer caste. The separate households or property 613 ●
groups within each lineage had the hereditary right, granted by the 564
king, to occupy stretches of garden land and to lease large plots of wet 566
paddy land on long-term tenure from the village landlord. The tenure 471
was called *kānam;* the tenant, *a kānakkaran.* In most villages the men of 427
retainer lineages also owed military service to their landlord, ultimately
on behalf of the king. (The military organization is discussed below.)
Retainers were called *adiyar,* a word equivalent to "vassals," of their
landlord. They participated in his household ceremonies and often
waited upon him. Women of retainer lineages could be summoned as
serving maids in the landlord's family; men, as bailiffs to collect the
landlord's rents and organize the labor of his serfs.

The Temple-Servant Castes In addition to the Nayars, other aristo- 564
cratic castes often lived in a village. These were the temple servants, 794
nowadays collectively called Ambalavasis. They are relevant to our
discussion because they sometimes married Nayar women. The highest
of these castes were the Chakkyars (or reciters of Puranic stories)
and the Pushpagans (or flower gatherers for temples), which had
patrilineal descent systems of the same type as the Nambudiris. They

564 ranked below Nambudiris but above retainer Nayars and certain matrilineal
794 temple-servant castes. The latter included Nambyars, Puduvals,
and Marars, three castes of drummers, and Psharodis and Variyars,
castes of temple stewards.

564 The temple-servant castes were small and lived chiefly in villages
794 owned by Nambudiri Brahmans or in sankētams. Four types of temples
were distinguishable among the higher castes. First were the large temples
of the sankētams, whose estates were managed by Nambudiris. They
were dedicated to all-India, Puranic deities, usually Siva or Vishnu.
Second, were the private temples of individual Nambudiri families in
villages owned by Nambudiris, which were small replicas of the first
type. Third were the private temples of royal and chiefly matrilineages,
dedicated to Bhagavadi or Bhadrakali—the Nayar goddess
of war, epidemic, land, and fertility. Fourth were the smaller
Bhagavadi temples of village Nayars, each collectively managed by
an assembly of Nayar retainers of one or more villages.

In the first two types of temple animal sacrifice was forbidden.
[782] Offerings were of fruit, flowers, incense, and fire. The priests were
[793] low-ranking Nambudiri Brahmans. Nayars might enter the outer
courtyards of such temples but might not perform rites there. In a
village which formed part of a sankētam there was sometimes no
Nayar population at all; a group of lineages of one or more temple-servant
castes replaced them as retainers of the Brahmans and as permanent
● [613] tenants. In Nambudiri villages containing a temple of the
second type, one or two lineages of some temple-servant caste would
be attached to the temple, but there would invariably also be a group
of Sudra Nayar retainers with their own Bhagavadi temple.

564 In villages under a Nayar headman there might be only one Bhagavadi
794 temple managed collectively by Nayars. One lineage of the Marar
613 caste might be present to drum in the temple, but the other temple-servant
castes did not work in Nayar village temples. Similarly, in a
royal or chiefly village containing a large Bhagavadi temple of the
ruling lineage, the temple-servant castes might be absent except for
one lineage of Marars. Persons of other temple-servant castes might
however come from nearby villages to assist at special ceremonies.

794 In Bhagavadi temples the regular priest was usually of a special low
564 subdivision of Nambudiris (Adigals). In addition a Nayar shaman,
[793] attached to the temple, periodically became possessed by the goddess
[791] and declared her will to the people. Daily rites in the Bhagavadi
[782] temple were similar to those in a Brahman temple, but annual festi-

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vals involved animal sacrifice by Nayars in which Brahmans and temple servants took no part. 564 [782]

Consistent with these differences in ritual practice, Nambudiris and temple servants were vegetarians and followed rules of non-violence. Royals, chiefs, and Nayar retainers were warriors and until modern [262]
times usually ate meat and drank liquor. The matrilineal castes of temple servants were otherwise culturally similar to Nayars, with [613] ●
whom they probably had a common origin.

Below the Chakkyars and the Pushpagans, the Nambyars, Psharodis, 564
Variyars, and Puduvals disputed for ritual rank and would not interdine. These castes ranked roughly parallel to the district chiefs, with whom they had few social relations and did not interdine. They ranked above the retainer Nayars, who might receive food from them but might not give to them. Marars ranked below the other temple servants and parallel to retainer Nayars, with whom, however, they had few social relations outside the temple and did not interdine.

The Nayar Menials in Temples Below all these aristocratic castes 564
came certain small matrilineal castes of menial, non-military Nayars 794
whose work was largely connected with temples. Vattekad Nayars [613]
were oilmongers; Odatt Nayars, tile makers; Andura Nayars, temple potters. One Vattekad lineage was present in every village to supply oil for temple lamps. Often the headman of the Vattekad lineage was the shaman of the Nayar Bhagavadi temple. Vattekad Nayars also performed household tasks for Kiriattil Nayar village headmen, which ordinary Kiriattil Nayars were too proud to do. Odatt and Andura Nayars were very small castes,[8] and one lineage might serve six or eight villages.

The Nayar Servant Castes Below the temple menials came three 564
matrilineal castes of servant Nayars with "degrading" occupations. 613
Chidigans (called Attikurssis in the Calicut kingdom) were funeral priests of the higher matrilineal castes. Veluttedans were washermen of all the castes above them and Vilakkataravans were barbers of all the castes above them. One lineage of each was usually present in a village. Funeral priests ranked above barbers and washermen, who disputed for rank and would not interdine.

Social Relations among the Higher Castes The castes so far men- 564

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[8] The kings permitted only Brahmans, royalty, and the greater chiefs to roof their [643]
houses and temples with tiles. Tile making was therefore a minor craft, and temple [333]
pottery was of superior quality to that used by commoners. The ordinary polluting [323]
caste of potters, Kumbarans, camped outside villages and exchanged their wares for grain.

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lage; and bow makers, each with about one to ten houses per village. 564
Tiyyars, astrologers, washermen, and barbers had double unilineal 162
descent: localized patrilineages with dispersed exogamous matrilineal [611]
clans. Artisans and bow makers had patrilineages only. [613]

The polluting castes worked for each other and for the higher castes. 564
Tiyyars held land on a sub-tenure from landlords and Nayar tenants. [427]
Astrologers and artisans gave services to the higher castes, to each
other, and to the Tiyyars, who ranked above them. Barbers worked for
all the higher polluting castes but not for the "good" castes, who employed the Nayar barber. Washermen laundered for all the higher polluting castes but not regularly for the "good" castes, who employed the Nayar washerman. However, the low-caste washerman's lineage owed services to the "good" castes at death, menstruation, and childbirth. Bow makers served Nayars and Tiyyars. Each of the polluting castes was endogamous and interdined only within the caste.

THE LOWER POLLUTING CASTES

On the outskirts of the village, in separate small hamlets, lived the very low castes of Parayas and Pulayas. Parayas were a small caste of basket and umbrella makers. Two or three households had a village right to serve all castes above them. Pulayas were until 1850 the agricultural serfs of Nayars, temple servants, and Brahmans (Buchanan, 1807: 370–372). As highly polluting castes, Pulayas and Parayas were theoretically forbidden to approach the high castes within a distance of sixty-four feet. They might not enter the "good" area of the village or walk on the main paths.

OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Muslims, called Mappillas, were concentrated in the Zamorin's king- 563
dom, where they followed patrilineal descent. In 1931 they formed [162]
about 15 per cent of Kerala's population. Their presence dates from
the ninth century, when Arab traders began to make converts, prob- [797]
ably mainly from the Tiyyars and the coastal caste of fishermen. From
the Arabs and from these converts there sprang a flourishing trad- [439]
ing community which increased greatly in the fourteenth century
(Logan, 1951, I: 192–197). The Zamorins derived a large measure of
their power from the Muslims through taxes and naval support (Ayyar, 1938: 54). Muslims lived mainly in the ports and at inland trad-
ing posts on the banks of rivers. They were partly outside the village [361]
ranking system, which had its basis in differential land rights, and
were theoretically outside the Hindu religious hierarchy. Nevertheless, [554]
Muslims were in some contexts accorded a rank ritually and socially
between that of Nayars and Tiyyars.

European trade shook the foundations of the caste system in other 439
ways. Ports grew larger, and within them European merchants em- 564
ployed Christian converts, artisans, and runaway serfs. Near the ports, [567]
serfs sometimes became slaves, being torn from their ancestral lands
and sold or hired for cash.

Nevertheless, until the introduction of steam power in the second [375]
half of the nineteenth century, the technology and over-all economy [177]
of Kerala did not change very radically. Trade was still limited to
surplus crops, luxury goods, and metals. Inland villages remained
largely self-sufficient, with the lower castes excluded from cash
transactions. Upward mobility was virtually confined to Muslims, [554]
Christians, and the Hindu aristocrats above the rank of Nayar re-
tainers. It seems to have been this lack of basic change in the tech- [177]
nology which allowed the persistence of a strict, hereditary rank
order in villages and, within each homogeneous local caste group,
of kinship as the main organizing principle.

War and Law

The traditional period was one of perpetual wars between adjacent 635
kingdoms, interrupted only in the rainy seasons. A royal lineage's 726
strength lay in its monopoly of gunpowder, coinage, and customs 613 ●
dues, its ability to use foreign and Muslim ships for naval warfare,
and its control of the royal domains both as a source of produce and
of Nayar retainers as soldiers. Through its superior wealth and
military power a royal lineage could force feudatory princes and
vassal nobles to muster soldiers throughout the kingdom in periods
of large-scale war. Each district and each village was classified ac- 701
cording to the number of Nayar soldiers it could customarily muster 635
for war. In the Zamorin's kingdom the strength of royal feudatories
varied between 18,000 and 1,000 Nayars; of Nayar chiefs, between 634
5,000 and 100; of village headmen, between about 100 and 25 (Ayyar,
1938: 278). Records of the muster of each feudatory were kept by the
Nayar clerks of the palace. The primary duty of each chief was to
assemble regularly the soldiers of his district for military exercises
at the capital, and in time of war to lead them to battle, with the
king himself at their head. Within the district military training was 701
organized on a village basis. This might be done by a Nayar village 634
headman, by the chief himself, or, in Brahman villages, by a Nayar 702
military leader (Asan) who acted for the chief or the king. All 564
Nayar boys of the retainer, village headmen, and chiefly and royal

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or *kara-yōgam* (Logan, 1951, I: 87–88, 132–133). The functions of 621
intra-caste administration of the Nayar assembly are discussed later [692]
in connection with the lineage. [623]

The village headman, assisted by representatives from the Nayar 622
retainers, judged small civil cases concerning debt, petty theft, or
trespass. He appropriated the fines in these cases (Munro, quoted in 692
Ayyar, 1938: 288). Individual Nayars also arbitrated in small civil 564
disputes carried voluntarily to them by disputants within their own
or the lower castes. Serfs came directly under the jurisdiction of their [566]
Nayar or Brahman masters, who had the power of life and death
over them.

In the castes above the serfs, larger civil disputes and grave 692
crimes were judged in the court of either chief or king. Chiefs' 564
(*nāduvaris'*) judicial powers varied with the size of their armies, but
feudatory princes (*svarūpis*) retained complete judicial rights with
power over life and death (Ayyar, 1938: 272). So also did the
Brahman managers of temple-estates, although they called upon
some local chief to carry out their judgments. Murder, sacrilege,
treason, the wounding of a cow or of a Brahman, indecent assault of
a woman, and grave theft from a man of "good" caste were generally
punishable by death (*ibid.*: 282). Brahmans and women, however,
were never officially executed by order of the king. All offenses among
Brahmans were tried by an assembly of the Brahman neighborhood,
which, with the local ruler's approval, might excommunicate the offender.
If a woman of any caste above serfs was convicted of a capital [567]
offense the king had the right to sell her into slavery.

The higher the cast, the wider the field of social relations. Among 564
the serfs and the higher polluting castes this was confined to a group 571
of adjacent villages. Among temple servants, village headmen, and
retainer Nayars (apart from their excursions in war) the field of social
relations was the chiefdom. Among chiefs and royalty it was the
kingdom, and among Brahmans, Kerala.

Hypergamy in the Upper Castes

Each of the castes below Nayar temple menials was endogamous, as 564
is usual in the caste system throughout India. But among the higher
"clean" castes the integration of political offices and of the larger
territorial units was strengthened by hypergamous marriages. By
hypergamy I mean the marriage of a woman of lower caste to a man
of higher caste.

In discussing hypergamy it is necessary to explain the descent 564
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system of Nambudiris. In the Nambudiri patrilineal extended family only the eldest son was permitted to marry (with Vedic rites) within his caste, and beget children for his family. Younger sons had recognized liaisons with women of the matrilineal castes, whose children belonged to their mother's caste and lineage by matrilineal descent. These hypergamous unions were regarded by Brahmans as socially acceptable concubinage, for the union was not initiated with Vedic rites, the children were not legitimized as Brahmans, and neither the woman nor her child was accorded the rights of kin. By the matrilineal castes, however, the same unions were regarded as marriage, for they fulfilled the conditions of ordinary Nayar marriage and served to legitimize the child as an acceptable member of his matrilineal lineage and caste.

If a Nambudiri eldest son remained childless the second son might marry a Nambudiri woman and beget children for his family. Unmarried Nambudiri women, of whom there were many, remained in their natal homes and were maintained by their fathers and brothers. The eldest son of a Nambudiri house might however have several Brahman wives (who lived patrilocally with him) and also several Nayar partners whom he visited in their homes. Nambudiri younger sons lived and ate in their natal households, headship of which passed from the eldest son down the line of brothers and then dropped to the next generation. In this way the Nambudiri family was prevented from splitting into segments and was enabled to maintain its ancestral estate intact over many generations. If in any generation a family had no son, succession was ensured by the adoption of a daughter's husband or of a man related through some cognatic tie.

The possible directions of hypergamous marriages in the Cochin kingdom are briefly as follows. In the royal lineages marriages were entirely hypergamous. In Cochin and Walluvanad royal women married only Nambudiris of the highest and wealthiest sub-castes within the kingdom. Royal men married women of chiefly lineages within the kingdom, of village headmen's lineages within their own domain, or of retainer Nayar lineages in the royal villages. In the Calicut kingdom royal women married either Nambudiris or the feudatory princes of higher rank and more ancient lineage than themselves. Royal men married women of the same lower matrilineal groups as in the Cochin and Walluvanad kingdoms. Women of the feudatory royal lineages married only Nambudiris; men married royal women or women of chiefly, village headmen's, or retainer Nayar lineages within their own area of rule.

564 613 Each Nayar chiefly lineage, like royalty, normally counted itself a separate caste and married only hypergamously. Women of chiefly lineages married the royals or feudatory royals to whom their lineages were immediately subordinate, or wealthy Nambudiris, usually of their own district. Men of chiefly lineages married women of village headmen's lineages within their district, or women of retainer Nayar lineages, usually in their own villages.

[622] Village headmen's lineages occasionally contracted marriages reciprocally with other village headmen's lineages of the chiefdom which had originally sprung from the same retainer caste. They also provided wives for chiefs and Brahmans and husbands for retainer women, usually of their own villages.

564 794 613 Among temple servants, Nayar retainers, and Nayar temple menials the majority of marriages were between persons of the same caste. A few women in the Psharodi, Variyar, Poduval, and Nambyar castes married Nambudiris, especially those whose families managed the temples where they worked. A few such women also married men of the Chakkyar and Pushpagan castes, which had descent systems like that of the Nambudiris. A few men of these matrilineal temple-servant castes married women of Nayar retainer and Nayar temple-menial castes in the villages of their work. Nayar women were particularly convenient partners for temple servants and Nambudiri temple priests because of the latters' spatial distribution. Often a temple-servant lineage or a Brahman priestly family held the hereditary right of service in six or eight small temples in villages up to ten miles away. One man of the lineage might spend much of his life working away from home in one of the more distant temples. He would live on food previously offered to the deity, occupy a room attached to the temple kitchen, bathe in the temple bathing pool, and visit a local Nayar wife at nights, returning home for life crises and festivals.

564 Women of the retainer Nayar castes might receive husbands from all the castes above them. Sudra Nayar women living in Brahman-owned villages or on the estates of large temples were the most likely to form links with Brahmans and temple servants; Charna Nayars and Pallichans, with royalty or chiefs; and Kiriattil women, with village headmen. Thus hypergamous unions entered into by retainer Nayars in general followed the main lines of lord-vassal relationships. However, "odd" marriages with individuals of any higher rank in nearby villages were permitted.

Because the higher castes were much smaller than they were, the Nayar retainers probably gave less than 10 per cent of their women

564 to men of higher caste. Men of the retainer castes made still fewer marriages in the castes of temple menials. The latter also received as husbands a few temple servants and a few Nambudiris of the lowest sub-castes of cooks and household priests. The temple-menial castes did not intermarry, and their men seem thus to have been confined to women of their own caste. Hypergamy stopped at this level and the Nayar servant castes were each endogamous.

564 ●613 The hypergamy of the Nayar office-bearing lineages fitted their gradual social mobility and lack of rank parity with each other. With time, because of the vicissitudes of war and conquest, a retainer lineage might be appointed as village headmen, and might later even aspire to chiefly rank. Several of the chiefly lineages of Kerala can be traced back to much humbler origins three to six centuries ago. Apart from the regular offices of rule over territorial units, commoner Nayar lineages might also attain special rank as ministers or military leaders. When a lineage received promotion in this way, its members in course of time declared themselves ritually higher than those of the caste from which they sprang and would no longer interdine or intermarry with that caste on equal terms. Hypergamy permitted these isolated office-bearing lineages to marry in unequivocally higher and unequivocally lower groups, but to side-step the awkward question of their precise rank in the hierarchy as a whole.

Hypergamous marriages, like all Nayar marriages, were tenuous and carried few obligations. Nevertheless, the dependence of aristocratic castes on each other for spouses and genitors must have strengthened relations between them. Hypergamy inextricably linked the secular and the religious hierarchies, whose interests in many contexts were opposed. Nambudiris waged a perpetual struggle to preserve their lands and judicial powers from encroachment by kings and chiefs. Their religious laws forbade bloodshed on the estates of their great temples. If a local ruler invaded such an estate or flouted its laws, the Brahmanical assembly exercised its religious authority to fine him in land, cash, or elephants and closed their gates till he repented. This does not mean that the kings were puppets of the Brahmans. When a king conquered a new district its Brahmans came over to his side. They gave him the right to protect their temples and to use their Nayar retainers in war, on receipt of a fine for any personal inconvenience they had suffered. They obviously needed the ruler's military protection of their religious and landed rights. The rulers in turn needed the Brahmans, for the whole social system was sanctioned by religious beliefs of which they were the chief

exponents. Marriages at all levels between the religious and secular 564
hierarchies pointed up this interdependence. 613

Among the Nayars hypergamy must also have cemented lord-vassal relationships. Older Nayars still take pride in the fact that their lineages have for centuries been fathered by chiefs, royals, and Brahmans. Traditionally, it was for the sake of this generalized filial bond that they were prepared to die in battle and, paradoxically, to deny themselves paternal rights in their own children.

Matrilineal Units of the Nayar Retainer Castes

THE CLAN

The clan was the largest matrilineal unit to which a Nayar commoner 614
belonged. Its members believed themselves descended from a common ancestress, but her name was not normally remembered and the exact genealogical relationships between a clan's subordinate segments were often unknown. Occasionally, all of a clan's known [621]
members lived within a single Nayar neighborhood (*tara*). In this case the clan was co-terminous with the next lower order of matrilineal unit, which I call the lineage. More commonly, the clan had a nucleus of members within the neighborhood from which it originally sprang, together with outlying segments whose forebears had moved to other neighborhoods of the chiefdom. Clan affiliations among Nayar retainers do not seem to have extended beyond the chiefdom.

The clan was called a *taravād*, the word also used for the lineage [192]
and the matrilineal household unit. "Taravād" is derived from "tara," [613]
meaning "mound,"[6] in this case the raised foundation on which a [592]
Nayar house was built. Its members derived a sense of unity from the [342]
belief that their matrilineal forebears sprang from the same ancestral house, and if the site of this house still existed they retained a sentimental attachment to it. The word "taravād" (befitting for a settled agricultural people) was in fact equivalent to the English "house" in its sense both of ancestry and of place. The clan was usually called by the name of its original ancestral house site.

The clan was exogamous and sex relations within it were forbidden. [834]
Those of its members who lived near and met often used kinship [601]
terms to address each other. If a death or birth occurred, clan mem- [203]
bers had to be informed by messenger. Upon receipt of the informa- [764]
[844]

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[6] Any kind of raised foundation of earth or laterite is called a tara. Tara (meaning "neighborhood") is derived from the large platform of earth round a sacred "milk" [783]
-exuding tree (*alstonia scholaris*) located near the Nayar neighborhood temple of Bhagavadi. The neighborhood assembly congregated on this mound.

[623]

614 tion they entered for fifteen days into a condition of ritual pollution. 764 They might not eat with nor touch other Nayars, enter the temple or 844 other houses, bathe in the public bathing pools of their caste, or eat meat or salt. Death pollution, and to a milder degree birth pollution, 783 cut off the clan from participation in the social life of the caste. It isolated the members as a group set apart in a special and dangerous ritual condition, who had to observe taboos for their own and each others' safety. Its observance stressed the kinship connection of clansmen and marked their common concern on the occasion of an increase or decrease in their membership. Only those clansmen living within the neighborhood, however, were obliged to attend a funeral or visit a house of birth. Beyond these observances clansmen had only loosely defined rights of hospitality in each other's homes. As far as I am aware they never assembled as an organized group.

614 In time a clan might divide into two or more clans by the common consent of its members. The decision to separate depended both on geographical distance and on distance of relationship. If a segment of the core unit moved into an adjacent neighborhood its members might maintain clanship with the parent lineage for several hundred years thereafter. If they moved to a distant part of the district (say, fifteen miles away) their grandchildren might sever the connection. Severing clanship was called "cutting the pollution bond." Representatives of the branches met and decided not to inform each other of future deaths in their respective groups. Usually the outlying branch would soon afterward adopt the name of the oldest ancestral house site in its own vicinity as its clan name. Exogamy was theoretically preserved as long as matrilineal ties were remembered—usually, about three generations after the division.

Beyond the neighborhood, clan ties had no legal or economic concomitants and were relatively unimportant, their claims being subordinated to those of lineage, village, neighborhood, district, and kingdom.

THE LINEAGE

● 613 A lineage comprised those members of a clan living in one Nayar neighborhood, and it operated within the legal and social framework of this unit. As we have noted, the retainer Nayars of a neighborhood were of the same caste. They interdined and intermarried freely and the neighborhood was their unit of caste administration. A neighborhood might comprise the retainer Nayars of one village or of two or three adjacent villages, or occasionally Nayars of only part of a large village (e.g., a royal village) in which more than one caste of

Nayar retainers resided. A neighborhood normally contained some six to ten lineages and probably had a population of about three hundred Nayars. 613

The lineage was called a *taravād*. If it occupied the ancestral village of the clan its members used the ancestral house name as both clan and lineage names. If it lived elsewhere its members added a distinctive name, derived from their new locale, to the clan name. Each segment of a lineage occupying one house in turn had its own house name, and each Nayar had a personal name followed by the caste title. A typical Nayar name might therefore be "Thengiparambil Padikkil Kirakkutt-Velappil Govindan Nayar"—"Clan of the coconut garden, lineage of the gatehouse, household of the eastern garden, Govindan (personal name) Nayar." Usually one branch of a lineage continued to occupy and to rebuild the oldest ancestral home of the clan. The clan, lineage, and house names of these members would then be collapsed into one.

A lineage normally comprised some four to eight households, each a matrilineal segment of three to six generations' depth, including the youngest children and the common ancestress. Sometimes the households of a lineage might occupy adjacent gardens on a continuous stretch of dry land in the high-caste residential area of one village. Alternatively the houses of a lineage might become scattered throughout the high-caste residential areas of the several villages of the neighborhood. For it was possible for Nayar tenants, with the consent of the various overlords concerned, to buy or exchange the tenures of gardens. Further, a branch of a lineage which was expanding might be allotted the tenure of a newly developed garden at some distance from its former abode. Normally, however, the gardens in which their houses were built remained in the possession of one or other branch of a lineage over many generations. 613 592

Some writers would not apply the word lineage to the group which I am discussing. It was not always a lineage in the sense of a matrilineal group tracing descent from a common ancestress through a determinate number of generations (cf. *Notes and Queries in Anthropology*, 1952: 88–89). This definition applied to lineages which had occupied a neighborhood only for six or seven generations. It might also apply to an older lineage some of whose branches had died out, or to an older lineage whose membership had not happened to expand greatly over several generations. Often, however, there would be very old lineages whose most distantly related segments no longer remembered their exact genealogical relationship and whose members 613

613 [592] were no longer sure of the name of their founding ancestress. The reason for this was that over time, a lineage was formed from the successive divisions of matrilineal households springing from an original matrilineal household. As will be seen later, a matrilineal group occupying one house and jointly owning property divided into its component major segments to form two or more new households at a definite point in its development. Each woman was potentially the ancestress of a distinct segment. However, her segment would in fact become distinct only if she had two or more daughters who themselves lived to bear daughters. If she had only one daughter this woman replaced her in the lineage structure as the ancestress of her segment, and after three or four generations the existence of one or other of these women would be forgotten.

613 592 768 [614] However, although exact genealogical relationships tended to be forgotten after some five to seven generations, the order of segmentation within a lineage was remembered because it was relevant to the reversion of property. If a household died out, its property was divided between those segments of the same order as itself which had sprung from the next larger segment. It is for this reason that I call the clan members of one neighborhood a lineage, for their order of segmentation *was* known and was relevant in this limited context. As far as I am aware, those branches of a clan which left their ancestral neighborhood lost their right to claim property in the village of their origin.

613 [578] [692] In other ways the order of segmentation was unimportant for the structuring of intra-lineage relationships. It is true that minimal segments of a minor segment which had jointly held property a generation previously, maintained a closer sense of kinship than did more distantly related segments. But segments intermediate between the household and the lineage had no special property, activities, or ceremonies, and their members never met to the exclusion of other lineage kin. Neither were whole intermediate segments mobilized in quarrels between individuals of a lineage. Quarrels were restricted to the households of the disputants and were normally settled through appeal to a popular, unrelated arbitrator. If they became serious they were forcibly settled by the intervention of the neighborhood assembly and of the village headman.

[614] [834] As a part of the clan, the lineage was exogamous, sex relations were prohibited within it, and ritual pollution was observed by its members at a birth or death. Outside the lineage and within the clan it is doubtful whether these rules could be enforced by law. Within

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the lineage they were legally mandatory. The local caste assembly, [623]
with the backing of royal or chiefly authority, could take action [692]
against offenders. Intra-lineage incest was indeed a crime punishable
by death. As a matter of courtesy, lineage members extended ap- [684]
propriate kinship terms to one another. [601]

Unless it was declining in numbers and had shrunk to the propor-
tions of a single household, the lineage was not an economic unit.
Its members did not jointly own an estate and did not coöperate in the [474]
production or distribution of goods. These functions accrued to the
small segment of a lineage occupying a single homestead, which I
call a property group. Lineage kin *were* the residual heirs of a [768]
property group which died out. However, such reversion of property
was rare. A property group which had no childbearing women usually [597]
adopted one or more girls from some other branch of the lineage in
order to perpetuate itself.

A "commoner" lineage had no headman. Its oldest man commanded special respect but he had no legal authority over the lineage as a
whole. The office of headman of the lineage existed only in village [622]
headmen's, chiefly, and royal lineages. Here the political office was theoretically vested in the eldest man of the lineage, irrespective of branch. These lineages had a somewhat different structure, discussed below.

The members of a lineage engaged in coöperative activities at two 613
major life crises: the pre-puberty marriage rite of girls, and the funeral 476
of a member, followed by offerings to the departed spirit on the [588]
fifteenth and sixteenth days after the death. [765]

Both of these occasions involved the caste assembly of the neigh-
borhood and the institution of linked lineages or *enangar*. The caste [564]
assembly comprised the eldest men (*kāranavar*) of all the property
groups. It met periodically on a mound (tara) near the Bhagavadi [623]
temple of the neighborhood to manage the temple's affairs. It also [692]
judged offenses against the religious laws of the caste.

Each lineage was linked by hereditary ties of ceremonial coöperation to two or three other lineages of the neighborhood. These linkages were reciprocal but not exclusive. For example, lineage A might have as enangar B, C, and D, whereas B might have A, E, and F, and so on. A chain of such relationships therefore linked all lineages of the neighborhood.

The enangar were partners who offered help in a ceremonial manner at all major life crises. They stood as formal links between the lineage and the total neighborhood group, which was called the *enangu*. In

613 small neighborhoods, indeed, all the lineages were sometimes enangar
476 to one another, although this seems to have been rare. At least one
man and one woman of each of its enangar lineage had to visit a
household for the life-crisis rites of its members, at which they gave
[553] ceremonial assistance and partook of a feast. These rites included the
[588] naming ceremony of a baby, the first rice feeding in the sixth month,
the pre-puberty marriage rite of girls, the first menstruation ceremony
[881] of a girl, the first pregnancy ceremony of a woman, the offerings to
[843] a departed spirit which closed the period of death pollution, and the
subsequent offerings each year to the spirits of recently dead members
[769] of a property group on the anniversaries of their deaths. Enangar
[765] also gave neighborly help on the day of a cremation and, during the
[783] fifteen days of death pollution, provided cooked food for the household of the bereaved.

613 Although whole lineages were linked as enangar to each other, a
linked lineage acted as a collectivity only at the pre-puberty marriage
592 rite, at cremations, and on the sixteenth day after a death. For the other life crises, each household of a lineage would invite as enangar partners only one household in each of their linked lineages with whom they had special customary ties. Similarly, the members of a household were not obliged to invite other branches of their own lineage to the minor life crises, although they might do so if they wished.

613 The enangar played their most important role at the pre-puberty
588 marriage rite. Every ten to twelve years each lineage held a grand ceremony in its oldest ancestral house, at which time all immature girls of the lineage of one generation were ritually married by men of enangar groups. This ceremony, called *tālikettukalyānam* ("*tāli*-tying ceremony") had to be performed for each girl before puberty on pain of her excommunication from caste (Gough, 1955). Before it took place, elders of the assembly selected suitable youths of the enangar lineages as ritual bridegrooms for the girls. At the ceremony each bridegroom, in the company of representatives of every household in the neighborhood, tied a gold ornament (tāli) round the neck of his bride. Each couple was then secluded in a room of the ancestral house for three days and nights, during which, if the girl was old enough, sexual relations might take place. On the fourth day the bridegrooms departed. They had no further obligations to their brides
[885] and did not need to visit them again unless they wished. After the
tāli rite, however, a girl was regarded as having attained the status of a mature woman, ready to bear children to perpetuate her lineage.

Shortly before or after puberty she might, following the ceremony, 588
enter without religious rites into sexual liaisons with one or more 836
men of her own or an appropriate higher caste. Similarly, a Nayar 564
man (whether or not he had ever performed the tāli rite) might enter 613
into relationships with any number of women of his own or an appropriate
lower Nayar caste.

These marriage customs are further discussed below. Here it is 613
relevant to point only to the role of the *enangan* bridegroom. Since 564
the enangar stood to the lineage as formal representatives of the local 588
caste group, it seems appropriate to interpret the tāli rite as a ceremony 182
of group marriage, in which the caste group as a whole married
the immature girls of the lineage as a whole.

The tāli rite was indeed both a religious and a legal transaction
between the lineage and the enangu or neighborhood group. If a [688]
girl was discovered to have attained puberty before it had been performed,
the assembly forced her property group to expel her and to
perform her funeral rites, for she was thought to be ritually dangerous
to her caste as a whole. For a woman, the tāli which she wore round [885]
her neck until death was therefore a sign that she had been ceremonially
and legally accepted as a mature woman of her lineage and
caste, "cleared" to bear children to perpetuate both groups.

The lineage similarly operated as a unit, and the enangar fulfilled 613
similar roles as formal links with the caste on the occasion of a 564
funeral. All adult males of the lineage who were junior to the deceased 764
attended his cremation, which took place in the southwest
corner of the garden of his house. Representative members of all [783]
enangar households also came to help with practical tasks and to
provide ritual objects for the chief mourner's ceremonies, although
they were forbidden to touch or to receive food from the mourners
throughout their period of pollution. In the fifteen days after the 765
death only the deceased's household, assisted by their special enangar 613
households, took part in the collection of the bones and ashes and 783
made offerings to the departed spirit. Other lineage members observed 782
death pollution in their homes and were attended by enangar
there. On the fifteenth day the lineage reassembled at the house of the
dead. After many ceremonies its members were purified by the funeral
priest from the pollution of death. On the sixteenth day final offerings
were made to the spirit. The deceased's household then held a large 613
feast, which was shared by lineage members and representatives from 765
all houses of the linked lineages. This reception of food by the enangar 564
from the hands of the deceased's matrilineal kinsmen marked a 783

564 formal recognition that the bereaved lineage, freed from its death
765 pollution, had been received back into the normal social life of the
783 caste.

Lineage members were also united in worship of their lineage
613 goddess or *dharma devi* ("goddess of moral law"). This goddess,
776 named differently in different lineages, was a species of the common
794 Nayar goddess Bhagavadi. Her idol was housed in a small shrine near
the oldest ancestral house or sometimes in the courtyard of the village
temple. She was believed capable of inflicting or withholding sickness
[782] and all types of misfortune. To ward them off, members
propitiated her with offerings of cooked food every year. The astrologer
might also advise an emergency propitiation. She had the power
[588] to bless women of the lineage with fertility. On this account she was
[842] worshipped before a tāli rite and also at the first menstruation ceremonies
of a girl. In a somewhat vague sense, moreover, lineage members
appear to have felt themselves collectively responsible to the
[753] goddess for sins or ritual lapses on the part of one of them. It was believed
that if any member failed to observe the religious laws of
[626] caste, to perform household duties correctly, or to revere the goddess,
[784] she might bring sickness or misfortune upon the lineage as a whole.

613 In spite of this sense of collective moral responsibility, the evidence
is unclear as to whether the lineage as a whole was held legally
681 responsible for any of its member's acts. It is true that the enangar
564 were the legal representatives of the local caste unit in its relations
with the lineage. This inter-lineage relationship was hereditary and
obligatory. It could not be entered into or permanently broken without
the consent of the assembly and the chief of the district. If,
moreover, an individual infringed a religious law of the caste, it was
[692] the duty of his lineage's enangar to summon a caste assembly to judge
[623] and punish the offense. Crimes, which were also sins, against caste
law included incest within the lineage; dining or sex relations with
prohibited lower-caste persons; failure to perform the marriage rite
of a girl before she reached puberty; failure to observe pollution at
the birth or death of a lineage member or (on the part of an individual
woman) during menstruation; failure to pay dues in kind
to the Nayar temple of the neighborhood. On being apprized of an
offense, the assembly's first recourse was temporarily to ostracize the
offender's household from the caste community. Ostracism meant
that the offenders might not enter the temple, bathe in public bathing
pools, enter the houses of other Nayars, employ the village servant

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castes, or receive customary help from their enangar at life-crisis 681
ceremonies. If the ostracism was not effected it was believed that the 564
whole neighborhood would fall into disfavor with the caste goddess [784]
and might become prey to epidemic or crop failure.

The point on which I am uncertain is whether the lineage as a 613
whole was ostracized, or whether other branches of the lineage 681
normally retained their caste status by severing their own connections 681
with the offender's property group. The latter actually occurred in a 684
case in Cochin in 1924. A Sudra Nayar woman had sex relations with 564
a man of the caste of Nayar funeral priests. Shortly after the assembly met, the other houses of her lineage repudiated all connection with the offender's household, which alone remained ostracized for a year. The woman and her lover then fled to Malaya. The household paid its fine and was reaccepted to caste. I do not know whether it was possible under native rule for a lineage to repudiate its responsibilities in this way.

Minor offenses, such as dining with low-caste people, were settled 613
by the offender's property group paying a fine to the village temple. 681
The offender and his household were purified from their pollution by 564
certain ritual acts. They then gave a feast to their enanger at which
they were publicly reaccepted to caste. Traditionally, graver offenses [783]
(such as the one above) met harsher penalties. The caste's judgment [574]
on such an offense traditionally had to be ratified by the district chief or by a royal officer. The offender was then either executed by his immediate matrilineal kin or surrendered to the king for sale into slavery. His household members performed his funeral rites and only then were they taken back into caste.

Whether or not the lineage as a whole was held collectively responsible for offenses against the religious law of the caste, it was not held responsible for civil wrongs judged by the village headman or for crimes judged by the chief or by officers of the royal court. The property group, headed by its kāranavan, and not the whole lineage, was responsible in cases of theft, debt, or other offenses concerning
property which were judged by the village headman. With regard to 613
a major crime, a Nayar who murdered another was tried in the court
of the king or of a higher chief. If the murdered man was of the same 682
or a higher caste than the murderer, the murderer was executed by a [696]
small group of Nayars selected by the judge. If the murdered man was of lower caste, the murderer's property group had to pay a fine to the district chief. Again, if a Nayar of any rank committed treason

613 Again if a Nayar of any rank committed treason
687 against the king, the king might order the execution of all members of his property group. Their land escheated to the royal lineage, but apparently no reprisals were made upon the lineage as a whole.

613 627 In spite of these laws of the kingdom a tradition did persist that the lineage of an offended Nayar had the moral obligation to avenge him (Logan, 1951, I: 169). Folk songs tell of blood feuds (*kudi-paga*) between lineages which apparently neither king nor chief could always quell, although the blood-feud tradition is not nearly so important as in North Malabar, where political centralization had advanced less far. In the central kingdoms feuds between commoner lineages and between village headmen's lineages could be most easily cut short by the higher authorities. Feuds between district chiefs' lineages were harder to quell and sometimes turned into small wars between districts, in which each chief amassed his feudal following behind him (K. M. Panikkar, 1929: 9). However, even in the twentieth [178] century under the British legal system, protracted estrangements have sometimes existed between two retainer lineages of the same neighborhood, which would periodically break out in armed assaults between representative individuals or even, occasionally, in murder. In recent years inter-lineage conflicts concerning assault and libel have also often been waged in the urban law courts.

Three institutions existed through which kings and chiefs seem to have tried to handle and curtail inter-lineage aggression. During wartime the problem was presumably less acute because the soldiers were away from their villages fighting large battles under their feudal lords. But wars took place only in the dry season; in the monsoons extensive military operations were impossible. Instead, each wet season saw a period of intensive military training in village gymnasia. Intermittently in this season, champions of lineages, of villages, and of chiefdoms went to joust at chiefly and royal palaces for the entertainment of their lords. Thus, first, these occasions may have helped to canalize intersegmentary conflict in a manner conducive to the royal peace.

Second, if a Nayar assaulted another or insulted his lineage, the offended man might challenge him to a duel. On payment of a fee to the chief, each disputant brought one or several champions from his lineage to fight on his behalf. Each pair fought until one or both was wounded or killed. A duel might be postponed as long as twelve years until the two lineages had trained champions to their satisfaction (Logan, 1951, I: 170). Often it was not fought by the original disputants. Duels seem to have been fought mainly to avenge the honor

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of matrilineal kinswomen against accusations of incest with a lineage 613 627
kinsman or of adultery with a low-caste man. Interestingly, these two 835
forms of slander still occasion the bitterest inter-lineage disputes in 837
modern villages.

Third, if a Nayar murdered another of the same rank, his lineage 613
kin had the customary right to carry the corpse into the courtyard of 682
the murderer's property group and burn corpse and house together. The royal and chiefly powers seem to have sanctioned this act as a form of private vengeance while reserving for themselves the right of trial and execution of the murderer.

In the law of the kingdom, therefore, the lineage was not recog- 613
nized as a unit having legal responsibility for its members' acts. The state vested it with no property and no internal structure of authority. Its members were not required to accept responsibility for one another's crimes and civil offenses nor were they accorded the right of unrestricted vengeance. They were merely *permitted* (probably as a concession to more ancient custom) to support one another in certain restricted situations, provided they acknowledged the superior authority of the kingdom's judicial agents.

I have written of lineages as groups of true matrilineal kin, and 613
so they often were. However, some procedure seems to have been 182
found necessary to adjust the lineage system to the territorial organization. We saw that segments might hive off to other neighborhoods; this must have become more common as sales of landlord and tenant rights increased during the period of European trade. My informants in one Cochin village told me that traditionally, when a lineage segment moved to a new village, its members were adopted as retainers and tenants by the local landlord. They were accepted into the assembly of their new neighborhood and permitted to perform their first tāli rite jointly with some established lineage. Presumably they also took over the enangar of this lineage. In any case my informants thought it would be necessary to obtain the sanction of the chief or, in areas of temple management, of a Brahman legal authority called a Vaidigan, to obtain new enangar ties within a neighborhood. The joint performance of the tāli rite set up a bond of fictitious matrilineal kinship between the old lineage and the incoming segment so that their members had thenceforth to observe exogamy.

This procedure served to provide newcomers with ceremonial and marriage partners and to induct them into the microcosmic political life of the neighborhood. The new members, however, were apparently never completely accepted as "true" matrilineal kin. Thus death and

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birth pollutions were not extended to them by their host lineage. Instead, as we have seen, they continued to observe these rites for several generations along with their clansfolk elsewhere.

The information on this procedure is incomplete because it does not take place in modern times. It is not known whether a lineage segment ever became incorporated into a new retainer caste as well as a new neighborhood, although this seems unlikely. It is not known whether an indigenous lineage which shrank to the size of one small property group ever allied itself in putative matrilineal kinship with another established lineage. It is also uncertain whether major segments of a very large lineage might over time break the pollution bond and gradually cease to observe exogamy. Some evidence from a Cochin village suggests that this may have happened. Shortly before my stay a man and woman of two lineages which had the same enangar and had never been known to marry, entered into a traditional type of informal marriage relationship. Elders of the village then began to wonder whether the lineages had not once formed one lineage, either by true matrilineal kinship or by joint performance of the tāli rite. As they were unable to foist their doubts on to the junior generation the marriage persisted. Thus, what may once have been an ancient tie of lineage and clan exogamy was quietly broken. I do not know whether fission within a lineage was traditionally possible or whether it occurs only in modern times, when the neighborhood assembly and the lineage itself are both disintegrating.

THE PROPERTY GROUP

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Structure The property group among Nayar retainers was a segment of the lineage having a time depth of some three to six generations, including the youngest members and the common ancestress. It therefore typically comprised a group of brothers and sisters (real or classificatory), together with the children and daughters' children of the sisters. This group was the joint-property-owning unit. Its members were from birth equal co-parceners in the buildings, land, movables, serfs, and all other property which had come to them from their matrilineal forebears, or had been conferred on them by their feudal lord, or had been acquired by the efforts of individual members. The group's oldest male member (kāranavan) was its legal guardian and represented it in the caste assembly.

When spoken of in its own right the property group, like the lineage, was called a taravād. When spoken of as a segment of the lineage it was called a *tāvari* (literally, "mother's line"). Tāvari could also be used of any intermediate segment of the lineage or of a mini-

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mal segment of one mother and her children within the property 592
group. Each property group usually had a separate garden name in
addition to its lineage name.

Residence Among retainer Nayars of this area a property group usu- 613
ally owned only one homestead and was simultaneously a dwelling 591
group. Occasionally among retainers, however, and more commonly 592
among chiefs and village headmen, a property group which increased
in size might build two or more homesteads on its lands. If the houses
were adjacent they were usually occupied indiscriminately by mem-
bers and cooking was done only in one. If the homesteads were some
distance apart each might be occupied by a minimal segment of the
group. The kāranavan would manage the resources of the whole group
but would allocate provisions separately to each household. Separate
cooking would be carried on.

Spouses lived separately in their natal units, with the husband visiting the wife. We shall call this type of residence *duolocal*.

A traditional homestead of retainer or village headman's rank cen- 342
tered about a large main building with two stories, separate staircases [351]
for men and women, and, in the middle of the building, a small court-
yard open to the sky. The house faced east, and was fronted by a
spacious veranda, used normally by men of the group and their male
visitors. Within, a passage led to the central courtyard, round which
rooms opened off on three sides. They included an ancestor shrine; [778]
several storerooms containing clothing in boxes, metal vessels, jewelry, [352]
weapons, and paddy (unhusked rice) in large wooden chests; one or
more rooms for everyday use, each with sleeping mats, a bench, [844]
wooden stools and chests, and a rope to hang clothes; and a small [841]
room occupied by women during their delivery and menstrual seclu-
sions. A roofed cloister with pillars ran between the open courtyard
and the rooms. Beyond the courtyard to the west was a long, narrow
dining hall with a large kitchen behind it. Behind this lay the back
veranda, normally used only by women and children. Upstairs might
be four or five bedrooms in which women received their husbands.
Men born into the group seldom entered these upstairs rooms and
were forbidden to use the women's staircase.

Outside the house in the outer courtyard a separate building served [343]
as a granary for paddy. The upstairs of this building was often set [351]
aside for the kāranavan's use. Here he slept, was served with food
by women of the house, entertained co-villagers, and kept records of
the group's economic transactions. If the group was large a second
separate building was often reserved to junior men for reading, en-

342 tertaining friends, or sleeping when they were not visiting their wives.
[343] A cowshed a few yards from the residential buildings completed the
arrangements in a normal retainer homestead. In village headmen's
342 and chiefly households whose women often had Brahman husbands
556 a separate building with its own kitchen was set aside to entertain
the men when they visited their wives.

[357] The buildings and outer courtyard were surrounded by a shady
garden of coconut, jack, cashew, and mango trees. Chiefs and village
[312] headmen had a private bathing pool with stone steps round it in their
own gardens. Retainers more often bathed in the large public bathing
[515] pools attached to the temples and reserved for "clean" castes of the
village. Men and women bathed and swam daily on opposite sides of
the pool.

351 In the southwest corner of the garden an open space was set aside
613 as the property group's cremation ground, entered only at funerals.
[764] In another corner was a dense shrubbery devoted to the snake gods
[776] of the group. Offerings were made there to small stone images of
[782] cobras, and if real cobras appeared they were regarded as manifesta-
[825] tions of these deities.

A high bamboo fence surrounded the whole establishment. It was
entered through a wooden gatehouse within which armed men might
592 sit on guard in time of war.

241 *Economic Activities* The property group obtained almost all of its
subsistence from garden and paddy lands held on tenure from the
427 village landlord and cultivated by Tiyyar sub-tenants or by Pulaya
613 serfs. The property group surrendered part of its produce in kind as
433 dues to the landlord. It retained part for maintenance, stored part for
repayment to its serfs as daily subsistence, and gave portions twice
annually to the village servant households. Tiyyar tenants retained
enough for their own needs, but gave the bulk of their produce to
their Nayar masters. Increasingly during the period of European trade
[439] the property group also sold spices and coconuts to Muslim middle-
men in exchange for cash or cloth. The cash was used to buy brass
[432] and silver vessels, gold ornaments and jewelry, and other luxury goods
[431] from the towns. The property group gave some cloth to its serfs
and tenants at festivals once a year.

613 The kāranavan managed all these transactions and controlled the
592 group's estate. He might allocate specific tasks of management to
juniors, but no payment was made on behalf of the group, no crops
[465] were sold, and no goods were consumed without his consent. Junior
men serving in the king's wars received small daily cash sums on an

individual basis, but this money seems only to have sufficed for their 613
food and other necessities while on the march or on service in towns. 592
When they were at home in their villages their kāranavan assumed [465]
responsibility for each man's customary gifts to his wives in other [431]
households.

Within his own household the kāranavan personally allocated their 613
subsistence to its members. Every few weeks he transferred quantities 592
of unhusked rice, vegetables, and other stores from the granary to 511
storerooms inside the house. They were then usually taken over by the eldest woman, who kept keys to the storerooms and chests and allocated daily supplies to the kitchen. In property groups with more than one homestead the kāranavan delivered quantities of paddy, salt, and coconut oil twice annually to each house according to the number of its members. Each house sent a person daily to the ancestral house to bring fresh vegetables, milk, buttermilk, and other perishable foods. In all taravāds the kāranavan controlled purchases from the town. Twice a year—at New Year and at the harvest festival—he distributed clothing to both male and female members.

Virtuous kāranavans were those who managed the daily affairs of 613
the taravād with thrift, justice, and meticulous care, but who, through 592
judicious planning, were able to lavish grand feasts upon caste mem- 574
bers, tenants, village servants, and serfs at the major life-crisis rites. An aged kāranavan would enumerate with satisfaction the various feasts at funerals, tāli rites, and first-menstruation ceremonies which he had satisfactorily conducted. Each of the servant castes contributed appropriate goods or services in advance of these feasts, and each Nayar house reciprocated the hospitality when its own life-crisis rites came round. Besides reaffirming in a ceremonial manner the different types of ties between Nayars and between Nayars and the lower castes, the life-crisis ceremonies seem to have stimulated production and provided suitable foci for acts of economic redistribution and reciprocity.

The amounts of time spent by junior men of the taravād on different 613
activities are no longer clearly known. We know however that at the 868
age of seven a boy was inducted into military training in the village
gymnasium; this training persists in a few villages, and includes fenc- [902]
ing, wrestling, rigorous exercise, and very strenuous massage. Tradi- [564]
tionally, Nayars also learned archery from a special caste of village
servants (Vil Kurups). For a part of their time they attended a vil- [875]
lage school run by yet another caste of schoolteachers (Eruttac- [872]
chans); almost all adult Nayar men and most women were literate [212]

● 613 in Malayalam and some became famous poets during the sixteenth
868 and later centuries. A Nayar received his arms from his feudal lord
[212] —a village headman, a district chief, or a prince—at the age of sixteen.
From this time until, perhaps, late middle age, he seems to have
[702] spent periods of each year away from his village attending military
[726] exercises in the larger towns or fighting in the continual wars against
the North Malabar chiefdoms, Walluvanad, or Palghat, or between Cochin and Calicut themselves. Evidently Nayars also spent long periods in their villages, at least in the monsoon seasons, for they policed the villages, arranged village festivals, were bailiffs on the landlord's domain, and paid regular visits to local wives. Nayar youths were also obliged to attend with their seniors and fulfill ceremonial obligations
[782] at the life-crisis rites of the landlord family. The rites were of course
[439] conducted in a grand manner and served as a focus for the collection
and redistribution of perishable goods throughout the village.

613 Nayar youths also did some cultivation of vegetables and spices in
868 the gardens of their taravāds. Every youth received a rigorous training
241 in cultivation methods, land management, the keeping of accounts, and the construction of houses, either directly from his kāranavan or, more usually, from the brothers of his own mother. However, there was no clear-cut allocation of differential authority and economic roles among the junior men of a taravād in this area. This was evidently not necessary because the bulk of the work was done by tenants and serfs, whose management could be most easily controlled by a single experienced man. It was enough that a young Nayar should learn *how* to manage and to cultivate so that he might one day replace his kāranavan. Their military duties were obviously the important ones for junior
[701] Nayars. It is unfortunate that we know next to nothing about how they were organized in the army, or even if they fought in lineage groups under the leadership of their mothers' brothers. All we know is that they were for the most part recruited in lineages, with the members of one lineage serving the same feudal lord.

613 The division of labor between the sexes was less rigid than in most
462 Hindu castes, but was well demarcated in daily life. Girls played with boys, attended the village school, and even received training in the
[588] gymnasium, until they underwent the tāli rite, usually at about the age of eleven. After this they were segregated from the men of their lineage and concentrated their time on domestic tasks. For most purposes the group of matrilineally related women formed a single work unit under the informal authority of the oldest (or oldest competent) woman. She gave out produce for cooking and allotted to each woman

in her care particular daily tasks in connection with cooking, housework, 613
the pounding of paddy, and the tending of small children. The 462
minimal unit of one woman and her own children, although having a
special solidarity emotionally, was given very little recognition in the
division of work. Women cooked communally in the kitchen, bathed [296]
and washed their own and any children's clothes in company in the
bathing pool, and at the harvests moved in household groups to the [243]
fields to help the serf women of their families in cutting paddy. Nayar
women's agricultural work, however, was subsidiary and they took no
part in the more arduous tasks of transplanting and weeding.

The women of a Nayar retainer lineage also owed services to women 613
of the landlord household to which their lineage was attached. Although 566
their lower-caste rank prevented them from touching their mistress 357
or entering her kitchen, they swept the house, accompanied its
womenfolk to their bathing pool, and did various household chores.
The landlord household normally chose three or four favorites from
among the lineages attached to them to perform these services, but
women of any retainer household might be summoned during the
special preparations for a feast.

Authority and Responsibility Property groups, rather than lineages, 613
were the main legal units within the local caste group. Their kāranavans 592
formed the neighborhood assembly. Within the assembly, a
kāranavan acted on behalf of his property group in managing the [692]
Nayar temple, settling small civil disputes in his own and lower castes,
and adjudicating in cases of offense against Nayar religious law.

A kāranavan also represented his property group in its relations with
its feudal lord and with higher authorities of the kingdom. We have
seen that the property group and not the lineage held land on tenure [423]
from its landlord, and that although a lineage was attached to a landlord
by hereditary right, the landlord conducted all economic transactions
separately with the head of each property group within it.
Similarly, each kāranavan was required to represent his own property
group in ceremonial attendance on his village landlord, the chief of
his district, or (if he were a direct vassal of the royal lineage) his
king, at religious festivals associated with the temples of these dignitaries.

On behalf of his property group, a kāranavan was held legally responsible 613
for his juniors in most types of legal offense. He paid their 592
fines from taravād funds if they were found guilty of petty theft or 681
debt before the village headman or the chief. If a member of the taravād
was convicted in the royal court of treason, his kāranavan and [687]

● 613 his whole property group might be put to death. Conversely, the property
592 group as a whole was rewarded for extraordinary military valor
681 on the part of one of its members. In a period of conquest of a new
[687] district, the king sometimes removed from office recalcitrant village
headmen or even chiefs of the enemy side and replaced them with
[703] property groups from among his own following. Again, when a soldier
died fighting with exceptional bravery, his chief sometimes rewarded
his property group with a plot of land held on a special military
tenure, under unusually favorable terms.

As we have seen, the property group had the prime responsibility for an individual convicted by the neighborhood assembly of offense against the religious laws of caste.

613 The kāranavan's day-to-day authority over his juniors was conferred
592 upon him by his feudal lord, backed by the judicial authority
681 of the king. He had the right to command and discipline all junior
692 members. In cases of extreme disobedience he might inflict corporal
punishment on the women or children, or cause a junior man of the taravād to do this. He seems to have had the right temporarily to expel from the household and to deny maintenance to junior men who insulted or disobeyed him. As manager of the estate he also had disciplinary rights over the taravād's tenants. In serious matters the tenants had recourse to the village headman, perhaps to the chief, but their own master settled minor disputes among them and fined them for small offenses. In law a kāranavan appears to have had complete rights of life and death over his property group's serfs. A very few cases are recorded of his exercising it to the full. More common are the stories of extraordinary loyalty between serf and master, especially of serfs who died fighting to defend their lords' homes. Their spirits were rewarded with a place in the taravād's ancestral shrine.

613 It is clear that whatever his *de jure* authority, the kāranavan's *de
592 facto* authority was greater over women and children than over junior
681 men, who were often absent on military service. It seems probable
681 that at these times soldiers came under the direct legal control of
692 officers of the kingdom and that in at least some contexts their property
703 groups were not held responsible for them. We know for example
that if a Nayar soldier murdered another he was tried in the court of the king or of a feudatory prince and, if convicted, was executed promptly by four or five of his peers, presumably without his property group being consulted or punished. Thieves caught within the boundaries of coastal towns seem to have been similarly dealt with (Barbosa, 1518, quoted in Ayyar, 1938: 284–286). It may be that their

property groups were held legally responsible for Nayar men only 592
when they committed high treason or when they became engaged in 681
disputes and offenses within the neighborhood of their birth. 692

It seems probable that the kāranavan's powers over his juniors and 703
over their property were limited by the codification of law which came 174
about during British rule (Aiyar, 1922: 33–132). It is not clear whether 613
he could traditionally alienate land without the consent of other adults 592
of the taravād; during British rule he could not. British law also permitted 671
appeal to the court by junior members for the removal of a 177
kāranavan who could be shown guilty of gross mismanagement. He
could then be set aside in favor of his immediate junior. An inefficient
kāranavan could moreover be forced by the court to maintain accounts
of his income and expenditure. Since 1933 in Malabar District
and 1938 in Cochin, all kāranavans have been legally obliged to do
this and to make available their accounts for inspection by junior
members once a year, as provided in the Madras Marumakkattayam
(Matriliny) Act, 1933, and the Cochin Nayar Act, 1938. However,
few juniors avail themselves of this right, which is evidently repugnant
to the traditional ideals of obedience and trust toward elders of the
taravād.

Even traditionally, however, both junior men and women were often 613
consulted in the management of the group's affairs. If a dispute arose 578
between minimal segments of the taravād it was common for appeal 692
to be made to an arbitrator of the caste from outside the lineage. The 592
settlement agreed upon would be embodied in a document called a
kārār, which legally bound all adult members. In large taravāds the
allocation of separate houses and sometimes even of separate land to
each segment was usually embodied in a kārār. All land continued to
be managed by the kāranavan, but he paid a sum of paddy each year
to the senior woman of each household from the land allotted to her
segment.

Kārārs were, however, common only in village headmen's, chiefly, 613
and royal property groups. Too little property was usually involved 592
in the case of retainer Nayars, among whom effective daily management
was divided between the kāranavan and the oldest woman. As
we have seen, the former carried out all formal transactions outside
the group, controlled the estate *in toto*, and disciplined men and boys.
The latter organized feminine tasks and held more informal authority
over women and small children. When the kāranavan was the son or
younger brother of the eldest woman, management usually ran particularly
smoothly. The oldest woman might indeed be *de facto* head

613 of the group, maintaining its accounts in her own hands and counseling
592 the kāranavan on his transactions with outsiders. When the oldest woman was the kāranavan's own or classificatory younger sister or sister's daughter her role was unequivocally subordinate and a formal division of duties was common.

613 *Rites of the Property Group* The property group jointly invited en-
592 angar households to the ceremonies of name giving, first rice feeding,
796 first menstruation, and death. The lineage as a whole held the tāli rite in its oldest house. However, expenses were divided between the property groups and food was cooked separately in their homes.
613 Similarly, at a death the whole lineage observed pollution and attended
592 the cremation, the gathering of bones on the seventh day, and
764 the purification and feasting on the fifteenth and sixteenth days. But men and women of the deceased's own property group offered cooked rice to the spirit in their courtyard each day during the pollution period. The rites of chief mourner were performed by the junior man considered most closely related to the deceased—her eldest son in the case of a woman, and the man immediately junior to him in the property group in the case of a man.

613 The propitiation of cobra gods and of dead matrilineal forebears
592 also united the group's members. The cobra deities (*nāgas*) could
776 inflict or avert sickness in general but were especially believed responsible
842 for the fertility or barrenness[7] of taravād women. If a
782 woman failed to conceive, a performance was held at which men and
women of a wandering caste called Pulluvar played instruments and
787 sang songs to entice the cobras to appear. A group of women of the
[753] taravād, who had purified themselves by sex continence and fasting for several days, then became possessed by the snake gods. They performed a wild dance, bowing and swaying in a circle and sweeping their hair along the ground. In this condition they might speak with the voices of the gods and announce whatever propitiations were necessary to appease them. Sometimes one or more of the women fell into a trance.

776 It seems reasonable to suppose that the snake gods were worshipped
842 as phallic symbols. They were definitely not regarded as the spirits of dead matrilineal forebears, yet were capable of withholding fertility or of causing women to conceive. Perhaps, therefore, they symbolized the procreative powers of past genitors of the property group, who

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[7] Snake gods inflicted barrenness; the lineage goddess inflicted miscarriages and sickness in childbirth.

had been so essential to its perpetuation, yet so firmly excluded from 776 842
its everyday affairs.

Within each Nayar house one room was devoted to the spirits of 769
dead kāranavans. It contained a number of small wooden stools on 778
which spirits were believed to come and sit. The ancestor shrine of
the lineage's oldest house contained many stools placed there in turn 613
for the kāranavans of past generations, reaching back to the foundation
of the lineage. A newer house would contain only the stools of
kāranavans of that house. Offerings of cooked food were made before [782]
each stool by the living kāranavan, in the presence of all members,
twice a year. The kāranavans' spirits were vindictive rather than
protective. They were prone to punish the taravād with sickness or financial [626]
loss if any of its members failed in details of ritual performance,
in care of the property, or in piety toward matrilineal kin. I 769
have suggested elsewhere (Gough, 1958) that the cult of dead matrilineal 613
forebears served as a focus for aggressive impulses which had 182
their origin in relationships with living matrilineal elders. At the same [154]
time it united the living in fear and reverence of the dead and reaffirmed
the moral laws of the taravād. It also acted as a sanction [626]
against a kāranavan's own exploitation of his juniors, since the maintenance
of right relations with junior kinsmen formed part of his pious
duty to his forebears.

The Splitting of Property Groups Genealogies and property documents 613
reveal that during the nineteenth century the property groups 592
of retainer Nayars divided at a particular point in their development. [175]
This occurred when the property group comprised two or more discrete segments descended from sisters, each segment containing an adult male capable of becoming kāranavan of his branch. For a segment to be "discrete," its founding ancestress, whether herself living or dead, must not have a mother, brothers, or mother's brothers alive. Separation before this point was not possibly because the division of property was stirpital. Individual men, the managers of property, could not separate themselves from their own mothers or sisters. A man could therefore never be a member of a different property group from that of his own mother's mother's brother, mother's brother, or brother. Division could take place only between groups headed by men from different minimal segments (parallel cousins, a man and his classificatory mother's brother, etc.), who were no longer held together by submission to a common mother's brother, grandmother, or great-uncle.

613 592 174 It seems probable that the property groups of retainer Nayars divided somewhat earlier in their development during the nineteenth century than during the period of native rule. The reason for this is that during British rule Nayar men, having no other compulsory work, considered themselves old enough to become kāranavans by the age of thirty to forty, provided their appropriate elders were dead. In the traditional period, presumably, a man would be in arms until at least the age of fifty and would be unlikely to press for kāranavanship before that age.

613 592 161 174 [175] Further differences in the patterns of division of property groups must have arisen from the marked increase in population during British rule. This is not documented until after the 1870's but from genealogies it appears to have begun between four and five generations ago. The increase would mean that more women, and a higher proportion of women, would have had enough living children to become the founders of discrete lineage segments during their lives or shortly after their deaths. Thus property groups in the nineteenth century would divide not only at an earlier point in their structural development but also more frequently than was the case during native rule.

613 592 174 423 The absolute size of traditional property groups was limited by the amount of land available to each. It can be roughly gauged by the size of the houses they left behind. It seems unlikely that a traditional retainer property group would contain more than twenty-five to thirty people, or fewer than six.

Interpersonal Kinship Relationships

121 I describe the relationships between kinsfolk as these have existed in the recent past in the most "traditional" households, making reference to earlier periods when this is possible.

WOMAN-SON

593 [858] The relationship of mother and son was the strongest in the system in the sense of mutual obligation and the expectation of mutual love. A man should place the needs of his mother above those of all other kin. A woman should show equal concern for her children of both sexes, but it was expected that her primary attachment would be to her sons.

[853] [863] [867] A woman's obligations to both daughters and sons in their early childhood included breast feeding to the age of two or three, care, especially in sickness, and instruction in cleanliness and in the manners and morals of their caste.

WOMAN-SISTER'S CHILDREN

A woman and her sister's children should behave toward each other 604
so far as possible in the same way as a woman and her own children.
A motherless child was brought up collectively by his mother's sisters,
usually attaching himself in particular to one of her younger sisters.
As a member of their household who stood in a maternal relationship
to them, a woman expected reverence, companionship, and practical
help from her sisters' sons and a measure of obedience, companionship,
and coöperation in domestic tasks from her sisters' daughters.

Terminologically and behaviorally, the mother's sisters were differentiated [601]
by age in relation to the mother. The mother's older sister
received more respect than the mother, especially if she was the oldest
woman in the household. Her role approximated that of the maternal
grandmother after the latter's death. The mother's elder sister usually
had children of her own by the time ego was born. She tended to advise
ego's mother on how to care for him rather than tending him intimately
herself. The mother's younger sister's role, by contrast, approximated
that of a much older sister. Before she had children of
her own, she often played the part of a long-suffering nursemaid and
usually remained a favorite throughout her life. A mother's younger [551]
sister who was younger than ego was called by her personal name
and treated as a younger sister.

Theoretically, attitudes proper toward the mother should be extended [601]
to all women of her generation within the lineage and clan. Actually, [602]
a rather sharp distinction was drawn between "mothers" of
ego's own property group and those outside it. Behavior which was [613]
axiomatic within the property group became a matter of polite etiquette [614]
toward more distant kinswomen. Within the property group
two or more sibling groups descended from sisters might oppose each
other in adulthood. When the maternal grandmother and all males of [578]
senior generations were dead, their disputes might culminate in division
of the property even while their mothers were living. Such inter-segmental
disputes created strains in the relationship with the
mother's sisters, but these ought not to become apparent in open quarreling.

WOMAN-DAUGHTER'S CHILDREN

A woman had strong control over her daughter's children. Her authority 603
surpassed that of the mother and she retained the last word in
matters of feeding or of care in sickness. At a time when her daughters
were absorbed in childbearing and in relations with their husbands,
she was deeply concerned for the future of her taravād as a group and

603 took upon herself much of the moral training of her grandchildren. It [869] was chiefly from the grandmother that children learned religious mythology and stories from their taravād's history. If she was the oldest woman of the house and if her son was kāranavan, a woman of strong personality might virtually direct the household, protecting the grandchildren both from their mother's indulgence and from their uncles' [861] displeasure. She seldom inflicted corporal punishment but was obeyed by young children more readily than the mother. As they grew to [858] maturity a woman tended to show indulgent pride in her grandsons as the pillars of her old age. By contrast she might show jealousy of her granddaughters and be a harsher judge of their manners and morals than was their mother.

MAN-SISTER'S SON

604 429 A kāranavan had special rights in and obligations to his sisters' children, some of which have been detailed. As their legal guardian he exercised the rights and obligations which normally accrue to the legal father in the higher patrilineal castes of India. He was respon- 604 86 sible for his nephews' training in the laws and morality of their caste, in literacy, in agricultural work, and in military skills. Much of this training he often dispensed in person either before or after he became kāranavan. He was responsible for maintaining the junior men of his taravād and for guarding and, if possible, augmenting the ancestral property on their behalf. In turn they owed him obedience, loyalty, and submissive respect. A kāranavan might inflict a beating on a disobedient nephew under about the age of sixteen or might order a younger brother to do this on his behalf.

604 Relationships with all mother's brothers within the property group were modeled on that with the kāranavan. A man owed all of them respect and obedience within the framework of the kāranavan's jurisdiction. Often a boy's junior mother's brothers were absent from the taravād. When they were home the mother's own brothers took a special interest in him. They might play with him indulgently until he was about the age of three. After this he learned to respect them, to be quiet in their presence, and to fear his mother's report of his ill conduct to them. As he grew older it was usually from his mother's own brothers that a boy received detailed training in agricultural matters and it was they who most frequently chastised him. Throughout [561] their lives a man owed obedience and loyalty to all men of senior [613] generation in his taravād, and after their deaths, regular offerings [769] in propitiation of their spirits.

[576] The etiquette of behavior between a man and his mother's brothers

was formalized to the point of avoidance. A boy or man might not 604
touch his mother's brother. Before entering the uncle's presence he 576
removed his upper clothing as a mark of respect. He might not speak first to the uncle but stood with arms folded and head bowed, attentively awaiting commands. He might not sit before his uncle except at mealtimes; he then sat down last and rose as soon as the uncle's meal was finished. When summoned for a lengthy interview he stood half hidden behind a pillar, holding his hand before his mouth lest his breath should reach the hearer. He might not chew betel leaves, smoke, spit, or use any but the most serious and respectful language in the presence of his senior. These rules of intercourse were most strict in the relationship with the kāranavan. For this reason a kāranavan absented himself as much as possible from family gatherings, living on the upper floor of the granary among his age mates of other lineages who came to visit him. With junior mother's brothers, who were more intimately responsible for his education, a youth's behavior was necessarily more relaxed. Even so, he observed the greatest possible formality, walked several feet behind them, and avoided them when he could.

A man should show loyalty to his mother's brothers in relations with 604
outsiders, if necessary defending them with his life. He was expected 613
to identify with them, receiving and perpetuating the noble traditions of his taravād. In fact Nayars did show great pride in the elders of their taravād as a group, exhibiting their virtues and hiding their weaknesses in the presence of strangers. There was regularly, however, deep hostility in their interpersonal relationships. The Nayars of today are well aware of this and expect acrimonious rivalry between the men of a taravād; hence, they say, the need for formal etiquette and strict ranking on the basis of age. A Nayar will speak of himself as bound to his taravād through natural love for his mother and sisters, and obliged for their sakes to maintain outward decorum in his relations with matrilineal kinsmen. In a modified form this suppressed hostility traditionally extended to all the men of the own, first ascending and second ascending generations. All male elders in the taravād 604
might be collectively called *kāranavar* (singular, kāranavan). Within
the property group they were numbered in order of age (irrespective 613
of generation) as first, second, and third men. All owed loyalty and 561
obedience to those above them and protection to those below them, 578
but all envied their seniors and feared the rivalry of juniors. The mother's own brothers were, however, the prototypes for this generalized rivalry. Whether or not Nayars experienced Oedipal hostility

604 to the mother's husband in their earliest years, there seems no doubt
●613 that a great part of their hostility to male elders became focused on
561 the mother's brothers by about the age of five, and that much of it
578 remained conscious. Thus occasional stories are told today of nephews who poisoned or stabbed their mothers' brothers and it is often remarked that kāranavans are "hated" and that "their position is not safe." Such tales of violence are regarded as shocking, but they do not arouse the horror with which a Hindu of the patrilineal castes would receive a story of patricide.

604 Relationships with the mother's mother's brothers were less intense
561 and rivalrous than with the mother's brothers. Until the age of three or four a small boy might be a playful visitor to the room of the great-
578 uncle who was his kāranavan. Often, this elder died while he was still small, so that the boy retained only affectionate memories of him. Otherwise he learned to behave with even greater formality to this elder than to his mother's brothers. He saw the great-uncle less often, however, and was seldom directly punished by him, so that the relationship tended to remain one of distant geniality.

604 MAN-SISTER'S DAUGHTER

As the head of her taravād a kāranavan owed his sister's daughter maintenance, shelter, and legal and physical protection. At her tāli rite and during her subsequent marriage relationships, only the sexual rights in a woman were lost to her taravād. All other rights, in her procreative powers and domestic services, remained vested in her taravād, represented by its kāranavan. He could command her obedience in the performance of household and minor agricultural work.
[429] He automatically became the full legal guardian of children born to
[684] her legitimately. If she seriously infringed the religious laws of her caste, for example, by having sex relations with a man of lower caste, it was his duty to expel her from the taravād and his right (very occasionally exercised) to put her to death by the sword.

604 In the nineteenth century, when monogamy gradually became cus-
584 tomary, a kāranavan arranged the marriage of his sister's daughter.
595 In earlier periods Nayar women seem to have exercised considerable freedom to select or reject their husbands. A woman might not, how-
178 ever, oppose her kāranavan's right to dismiss an unwelcome husband.

All the mother's brothers of a woman had the right to command
604 her domestic services and to discipline her in minor ways. As in the case of a boy, they might play with her until she reached the age of three or four, after which they became somewhat feared authorities.
[861] A man might occasionally beat his sister's daughter, until the age of

seven or eight, but he would not inflict heavy punishment unless he 604
was sure of the child's grandmother's and her kāranavan's support. [861]
After she had undergone the tāli rite a man was forbidden to touch [588]
any junior woman of his taravād. His relationship with his sister's
daughter thereafter became very distant. In accordance with rules 604
associated with incest prohibitions, he might not be alone in a room 576
with her and would scrupulously avoid suspicion of intimacy. He
would absent himself when her husband entered the house, remaining
on the outer veranda, in the separate men's building, or in the
house of his wife. A woman must remain standing and remove her
upper clothing when her mother's brother entered her presence. She
must not speak first to him, must not laugh in his presence, and must
respond with extreme submissiveness to his requests. When possible
a man would communicate advice to his sister's daughter through
some kinswoman senior to both of them. Thus, except to serve him
with food, a woman had little direct intercourse with her mother's
brothers.

Modern Nayars admit freely that the partial avoidance between 604
men of the taravād, on the one hand, and that between men and 613
women junior to them in the taravād, on the other, have quite different 182
foundations. The former is a defense against aggression, the 561
latter against desire. Nayars partially avoid their younger sisters and
nieces, it is admitted, because otherwise they might be tempted to
commit incest with them. As things are, in speaking with others, men 604
often express a respectful tenderness toward their sisters' daughters 613
and a pride in their qualities. Because of the difference of sex, and
therefore of ambitions and interests, there is much less potential conflict
here than in the relationship with the sister's son. By an orthodox
kāranavan in particular, its young women are seen as the fine flower
of his taravād. Whatever may be his more selfish inner feelings, he
expresses gladness when there are many of them to perpetuate his
matrilineal group. For their sakes and for the sake of the heirs they
may bring him, he welcomes their husbands to his home. When the
latter are aristocrats of higher caste, his pride seems the more easily
to outweigh any potential hostility toward them.

In orthodox homes today, women's attitudes to their mothers' brothers [578]
seem to be variously compounded of fear and admiration. A woman
fears her uncle's anger and may resent his harshness toward her
brothers and sons. If, however, he manages her household with equity
and if his reputation stands high in his neighborhood, he may become
a distant hero in her eyes.

593 Organized
[578] duels as well as illegal battles between lineages seem to have been
fought chiefly to vindicate a kinwoman from the unproven charge of
[613] cohabitation with a man of low caste, or to protect her from any form
of obscene slander. Such approved forms of aggression against Nayars
[154] of other lineages may have provided outlets for a brother's sexual
jealousy, which he might show only covertly toward his sister's
[684] socially recognized husbands. If, on the other hand, a woman were
finally judged guilty of sexual relations with a man of low caste, the
law permitted her brothers to vent their jealous fury by putting her
and her lover to death.

BROTHERS

[561] The relationship between brothers had much in common with that between a man and his sister's son. Age rank was of the greatest significance: even twins, or classificatory brothers born on the same day, were mutually ranked in terms of birth order, the elder preceding the younger in succession to the kāranavanship. Brothers near in age played together in early childhood, but toward adolescence their behavior became formalized to the point of partial avoidance. The elder might command the junior to do small tasks for him. A much older brother might inflict corporal punishment within the limits set by the kāranavan's authority. In general, a man's etiquette in the presence of his brother was the same as that shown to the mother's brother. A man whose elder brother was also his kāranavan treated him with even greater respect and when possible avoided his presence.

The social distance required between brothers must have been made possible by the fact that they were often absent from home, and that, when home, they had little need to coöperate in work. In modern times a man who resides with his elder brother or mother's brother usually works independently outside the taravād, spends much time in his wife's house, and restricts his intercourse with his senior to mealtimes and to formal consultations concerning their property. Unfortunately we do not know what, if any, was the structure of authority or the division of functions between brothers who traditionally fought together in war.

593 Great rivalry was admitted to exist in the relationship between
578 brothers. They were thought of as bound to the taravād through their
mother and sisters, rather than directly to each other. At the same time, sons of the same mother could be expected to support each other in conflicts with children of the mother's sister, while both sibling groups might experience a common resentment of their maternal uncles' authority. In broader contexts, the men of a property

593 to the kāranavan. Even in relation to small children they tended to seek the backing of a brother to maintain discipline in the home. Old women who had passed the menopause had the greatest authority. They could move freely about the village, travel alone on pilgrimages, and wield influence over their younger brothers and sons. [562] But even old women in some contexts found themselves united with their juniors as a group of legal minors under the command of a male authority.

Under these circumstances the mutual behavior of women was intimate and informal. Their joint tasks, carried out in the confined space of the kitchen, encouraged this intimacy. Further, as natal kinswomen they were habituated to each other from birth. Unlike a woman and her daughters-in-law in a patrilineal household, their group membership was unitary and they experienced a continuity in major roles and loyalties from birth to death.

593 561 461 If she were competent, the oldest woman of the household delegated its tasks, allowing flexibility for seasonal variation and unusual occurrences. Generally, girls who had not reached puberty ran errands between houses, did small outdoor tasks, and played with their younger siblings. The younger married women shared the heavy work of pounding paddy, milking cows, cleaning dishes, and most of the cooking. Old women had pride of place in the kitchen and living room. They supervised cookery, occupied the best seats, and controlled their juniors' consumption of betel leaves, areca nuts, and tobacco from the family box. Elderly mothers took pride in serving their children and grandchildren with food on birthdays. In a large house young married women had considerable leisure and privileges. Through the day they took turns visiting the village bathing pool in couples, an event which gave opportunity for gossip and allowed them to be seen by (although not to converse with) the men of neighboring groups. [422] Old women proudly distributed the taravād's jointly owned jewelry among the young and marriageable women, helped [613] them to apply cosmetics and to dress their hair, and obtained a vicarious satisfaction from their marital conquests. For a few years—until she had several children—a young woman's life was gay and not overburdened with work. Women of childbearing age also had [841] periods of respite from the kitchen. They were secluded in an inner room for three days during menstruation and did no household tasks [844] for ninety days after a birth. In these conditions the division of labor was not strict and the segments descended from women were not segregated in their functions. Women wielded most control over their

own daughters and grandchildren, but sisters "stood in" for one 593 561
another in caring for their children and contributed their work in a 461
manner conducive to the general welfare.

Between sisters, especially own sisters, there was deep personal 593
affection as well as loyalty to the sibling group and to the taravād.
Sisters were also rivals, often squabbling over jewelry, clothing, and [578]
favors. Both rivalry and affection were most intense between sisters
close in age.

Most women died in their ancestral homes among their siblings and
children. Only a woman whose forebears and brothers were all dead
might move away from her sisters into a separate property group
headed by her son as kāranavan. Even so, sisters often lived to experience [578]
covert disputes between their children, who looked forward
to the day when they would separate into new branch taravāds. In
the last resort sisters would support their own children in quarrels,
although they tried not to become involved in such disputes but to
preserve their mutual amity.

MARRIAGE

The taravād was obviously of very great strength as an economic and 613
legal corporation. Correspondingly, marriage was the slenderest of 581
ties.

Every ten or twelve years, the immature girls of one generation 613
within a lineage were ritually married on the same day by men drawn 588
from their enangar lineages. Before the ceremony the girls were
secluded for three days and caused to observe ritual prohibitions as
if they had menstruated. (The actual rite of tying the tāli or gold [585]
ornament around the bride's neck is the central rite of "normal" marriage
among most of the patrilineal castes of South India.) After the
tāli rite, each couple was secluded for three days in a room of the
ancestral house. Their seclusion clearly marked a ceremonial if not
an actual defloration, and travelers' accounts of the sixteenth to
eighteenth centuries indicate that the brides were actually deflowered
at this time (Stanley, 1865: 24; Kerr, 1811: chap. 6; Hamilton,
ed. Penzer, 1930, I: 174). During the seclusion period, rites were [842]
performed to the goddess Bhagavadi to enhance the girls' fertility. [776]
On the fourth morning each couple took a purifying bath and ate a
meal together. In Calicut and Walluvanad, although apparently not
in Cochin, each bridegroom then tore in two the lower cloth worn by
the girl in the period of seclusion. He kept one half and handed the
other to the girl. Their personal obligations ended, the bridegrooms
left the household.

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588 If he wished, a girl's ritual bridegroom might later visit her as one
of a series of husbands, but he had no prior claims and was not
765 obliged to do so. The woman in turn owed no obligations to him
except that at his death, she and all her children by whatever biological
983 fathers must observe fifteen days of ritual pollution for him.
Ritual pollution was otherwise observed only for matrilineal kin.
Until modern times it was not observed by a woman and her children
for a visiting husband who was not also the woman's ritual husband.
601 In addition, if they knew him, a woman's children called her ritual
husband by the Dravidian word *appan*, the term used for the father
in the patrilineal castes. Their mother's visiting husbands they called
by the Sanskrit term *acchan;* this word means "leader" or "lord" and
was also sometimes applied as a title to village headmen and military
leaders.

836 After the tāli rite and shortly before or after puberty, a woman
837 might enter into a number of sexual relationships with men of her
local caste group or of an appropriate higher caste. Similarly, a Nayar
564 might visit a number of wives of his own or an appropriate lower
Nayar caste. Among retainer Nayars, by far the majority of unions
were between persons of the same caste. A very few favored women
had husbands from the lineages of temple servants, village headmen,
chiefs, or royalty, or from houses of Nambudiri Brahmans of relatively
low rank. A smaller number of Nayar retainers had wives in the lower-ranking
castes of Nayar temple menials, but not in the servant castes
of Nayar washermen and barbers, which were endogamous.

595 It is not certain how many husbands a woman might have at one
837 time; various writers[*] of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries mention
between three and twelve (Logan, 1951, I: 136–137). Others add that
175 women "never refused themselves" to occasional Brahman or Nayar
visitors of appropriate rank. It seems probable that each woman had
a small number of husbands from her local caste group who, while
their relationship lasted, visited her regularly, but that women also
received occasional fleeting visits from itinerant Nayars of appropriate
rank, perhaps mainly during military operations.

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113 [*] See, for example, Abdu 'r Razzak (1441), Nicolo di Conti (1444), Hieronimo de Santo Stephano (1563), and Cesar Fredericke (1563), in Hakluyt Society Publications Vol. 22, 1857; Duarte Barbosa (1518) and Joao de Barros (early sixteenth century) in Dames, 1921, II: 124, 241; Ludovico di Varthema (1503–1508), tr. J. W. Jones, 1863; 146; Zein-ud-Deen (1579), tr. Rowlandson, 1833: 63; J. H. van Linschoten (1596) in Hakluyt Society Publications Vol. 71: 279; Pietro della Valle (1624), Hakluyt Society Publications Vol. 85: 579; Hamilton (1727), ed. Penzer, 1930, I: 310; Buchanan, 1807, II: 411.

A husband normally visited his wife after eating supper in his 595
natal home, and left before breakfast. Even today in many orthodox
Nayar homes men eat regularly in their taravāds and accept food in
their wives' homes only on special invitation from their wives'
kāranavans. Traditionally a husband placed his weapons outside his [201]
wife's door as a sign to other men that he was within. My informants
in a Cochin village reported that, within living memory in the late
nineteenth century, if two husbands called on the same night the one
who came last might sleep outside on the veranda. Usually a woman's
regular husbands knew each other and informally agreed upon their
turns.

The relationship with the visiting husband was called *sambandham* 585
(Sanskrit, "joining together"). At the start of a girl's first sambandham 595
her husband came to her house privately at night, sometimes with a
few friends of his own age. In the presence of the girl's kin he presented
her with a white cloth of the kind worn as a skirt. The occasion
was not marked by feasting. Later husbands might or might not
present the cloth. A transient visitor is said to have left a gold coin
beneath the woman's pillow, and a regular husband might do the
same on the first night of his union.

While his relationship lasted, a regular husband was expected to 595
make gifts to his wife at the three main festivals of the year. Vishu, in 431
April, was the Malayalam New Year; Onam, in September, was a [796]
harvest festival; Tiruvadira, in December, was a women's festival to
Kama Devan, the god of passion. The gifts were of bathing oil, [776]
bananas, wafer biscuits, and betel leaves and areca nuts for chewing.
In some areas a husband also gave a loin cloth of superior quality at
Onam. The gifts were prepared by women of the husband's taravād, [613] ●
and he should present them in person to each of his wives on the
festival day. If a husband failed to make these gifts it was a tacit sign [586]
that he had ended the relationship. It should be noted that the gifts,
trivial in value, were gifts of courtship and were in no sense maintenance.
Bathing oil is a feminine toilet requisite; wafer biscuits are [302]
delicacies served at feasts; and the giving of chewing materials between [262]
a man and a woman is everywhere in South India associated [276]
with courtship or with the first night of marriage. A husband had no
obligation at all to maintain his wife, for she received her food, [584]
shelter, and regular clothing from her taravād. [585]

The only other obligations of a husband came at the birth of a 843
child. When a woman became pregnant it was necessary for one or 595
more men of appropriate caste to acknowledge possible biological 431

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595 paternity. This they did by making gifts to the woman herself and
to the midwife immediately after the birth. Any man who had visited
431 the woman in the appropriate time period was required to make
these gifts. If a man refused, he could be called upon by the caste
assembly to fulfill his obligation. The gifts comprised two new
lower cloths for the mother and one cloth and a quantity of paddy
as payment to the Nayar woman barber who attended at the de-
843 livery. Again, these gifts were clearly legal and ceremonial tokens
595 rather than objects of substantial economic value. Legally, however,
their transfer was of the utmost significance. For if no man would
431 consent to make the delivery payments, the woman was assumed to
684 have had sex relations with a man of lower caste or with a Muslim
or a Christian. Her caste assembly would temporarily excommunicate
her taravād until she and her child had been driven out by their
kāranavan and the woman's funeral rites had been performed. The
woman, presumably with her child, might be executed by her
matrilineal kinsmen or allowed to become a slave of the district chief
or the king. If the woman and her lover were publicly exposed even
before the birth of the child, both might be put to death.

595 A woman had no obligations to her husbands other than the
593 granting of sexual privileges. Nayar husbands of the woman's own
caste occasionally dined in her household but this was a favor and
564 not a right. Nayar households sometimes provided uncooked food
and a separate building for Brahman or chiefly husbands, but this
again seems to have been a matter of courtesy rather than of obliga-
[431] tion. Husbands of higher caste made the same gifts to their wives
as did Nayar husbands.

595 In the nineteenth century her kāranavan selected a woman's first
584 husband, and he may have done so at earlier periods. Until the
1930's many kāranavans also retained the right to dismiss a husband
586 who displeased them. It seems improbable, however, that a woman
● 613 or her kāranavan would ever refuse the visits of a Brahman, chief, or
[837] village headman of powerful standing in the community. In some
cases also a husband of higher caste seems to have monopolized the
[564] favors of a Nayar woman, a privilege not accorded to men of her own
caste. K. Kannan Nair reported (1908: 186) that until a century
previously local chiefs sometimes compelled a woman to receive as
husbands those of her enangar who wished to marry her. In general,
however, women seem to have been free to reject particular men, and
both men and women to terminate liaisons without formality.

000 In all possible respects attempts seem to have been made to reduce

In all possible respects attempts seem to have been made to reduce
the intensity of marital ties for the sake of the unity of taravād, 595
village, and kingdom. Good men were men who devoted themselves 613
first to the service of their feudal lords, and second to the welfare of 577
their taravāds. Weak and immoral men were men who became inveigled by their wives and their children, so that they tried to make unnecessary gifts to their wives and neglected their taravāds. An ideal kāranavan was one who broke off his marital ties in old age and devoted his energies solely to his sisters' children. Institutional recognition [593]
of emotional attachments between spouses was reduced to a 595
minimum. If a man by accident died in his wife's house his body was 764
immediately brought home for cremation by his lineage kin. After a
man's death his current wives were permitted to come and view his 613
corpse. They were then ceremonially conducted out from the north side of the house—the side opposite to that from which the god of death had come. They must not look back at the house of death and they might never visit it again. They and their children took no part in the funeral or the subsequent anniversary rites nor did they observe death pollution.

In spite of the institutional precautions, undoubtedly some men 595
formed strong emotional attachments to particular wives and their 754
children. The institution of sorcery came into play at this point
(Gough, 1958). Among Nayars, sorcery was practiced mainly against 613
affines; it was ineffectual within the lineage. It was believed to be 593
practiced most by junior members of a taravād against the matrilineal kin of their kāranavan's wife. The reason was that if he were particularly attached to a wife, the juniors of a kāranavan might fear that he would transfer to her gifts and cash which belonged legally to his taravād. They could not make their complaint in law, for the kāranavan was their legal representative. Instead, they are said to have secretly engaged low-caste practitioners to recite spells and make offerings to some minor malevolent deity with the object of bringing sickness upon the wife or her kin. If they suspected such evil doing, the members of the wife's taravād might in turn hire a "good" practitioner of their own who would appeal to some other deity to return the misfortune to the senders. It is clear that Nayars did hire "good" practitioners to perform countermagic against affines; whether in fact they hired evil practitioners to perform sorcery
in the first place is uncertain. At all events the institution of sorcery [754]
provided a covert outlet for interpersonal hostilities between affines which could find no expression in open conflicts between their groups
as a whole. The result of the hostilities was often termination of the [586]

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754 particular marriage, for the spouses, unable to bear the machinations
613 of their relatives, would often end their relationship.

586 I have called these Nayar institutions "marriage" because they
limited and regulated sexual relationships and because they served
581 to legitimize children. The provisions of both the tāli rite and the
588 sambandham were directed toward these ends. The tāli rite was both
a legal and a ritual institution. First, it symbolically conferred sexual
and procreative powers upon the girl. The mock menstrual seclusion,
the rites to the fertility goddess, and the "defloration" all indicate this.
Second, it took the sexual rights in a girl away from her matrilineal
kinsmen as soon as they had been conferred. This appears in that the
[835] girl and her elder matrilineal kinsmen must observe the rules of
etiquette associated with incest prohibitions from the day of the
tāli rite. Third, it transferred the sexual (but not the procreative)
rights in the girl to a representative of her caste in the person of an
enangan. Fourth, however, this man at once renounced his rights in
his capacity as an individual, after which they became available to
men of the caste, and of appropriate higher castes, as a group. All of
this was accomplished in good time *before* the girl actually attained
puberty and was capable of entering fruitfully into sexual liaisons. It
[834] was strictly forbidden for a man to have relations with a girl before
her tāli rite, and if the rite was not performed before puberty she
was expelled from caste.

595 With regard to the sambandham institution, sex relations were not
834 promiscuous. They were forbidden within the lineage, within a
certain range of affines (discussed below), and, most categorically,
851 with men of lower caste. It was therefore necessary to have some
procedure for legitimizing children, to show that they had been
fathered by men standing in the appropriate roles. The legally obligatory
payments by husbands at the time of birth accomplished
this, and if no one could be found to make the payments, the woman
and child were expelled from the caste.

595 It was appropriate that a woman should wear the tāli throughout
her life and that she and her children should observe death pollution
[765] for the ritual husband rather than for any particular visiting husbands.
[783] For neither the ritual husband nor the visiting husbands had rights
in the woman *as individuals*, nor had the woman or her children individual
[564] rights in them. After renouncing his individual rights, however,
the ritual husband remained for life, in relation to this woman,
the representative of his caste, which in law had collectively married
her and collectively fathered her children.

kinsmen and they avoided her except on ceremonial occasions. She 602
had a relationship of mutual courtesy with all of her husband's older
kinswomen and was given meticulous respect by her husband's junior
kinsfolk of both sexes. The *ammāyi* (mother's brother's wife) and the 604
chēdatti amma (elder brother's wife) play a role in Nayar jokes and 607
folk tales somewhat comparable to that of the stepmother in Europe. [522]
As was mentioned in connection with witchcraft, junior members of [538]
a taravād habitually resented these women's hold over their husbands
and represented them as grasping, unscrupulous, and intent on robbing their husbands' juniors. This fear of the mother's brother's wife [184]
was however much more pronounced in North Malabar, where marriage was monogamous or polygynous and residence avunculocal.

Co-wives and the wives of brothers, being in different houses, had 607
no institutionalized relationships and apparently very little contact. 595
The husbands of women of a property group also had only slight relationships. There was no structure of authority between them because 602
they performed no activities together. The younger men accorded 592
some deference to the older, but all might sit together informally and
exchange news.

Virtually nothing is known of the relationships between co-hus- 595
bands except the testimony of several writers from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries that they "agreed very well" with each other. They are said to have distributed the woman's time among them in a convenient manner "according as they can fix a term among themselves" (Hamilton, ed. Penzer, 1930, I: 172).

Among the Nayars of this area, households of the linked lineages 613 ●
or enangar fulfilled the customary obligations and carried out the 592
ceremonial roles which were required of an individual's affinal or matrilateral kin in the patrilineal castes of Kerala. It was enangar who *must* take part in life-crisis rites, make gifts at first menstruation and marriage ceremonies, and come to assist at deaths. Enangar were of course often currently affines of the households in which they officiated, for sambandham relationships took place most intensively between lineages of the local caste group. However, the enangar relationship did not derive from particular sambandham ties nor was it brought about by particular tāli rites. It was rather a hereditary relationship of "perpetual affinity" between lineages as groups, which persisted irrespective of the making and breaking of particular sexual ties. When a man who happened to have sambandham with some woman of a household acted there in his role of enangan, he did so as a representative of his lineage, irrespective of his interpersonal mar-

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592 riage tie. Often, the particular persons who officiated as enangar did not happen to be currently having marital relations with any member of that house. This inter-group relationship of ceremonial obligation fitted the fact that particular marital ties were too transient and slender to carry the normal obligations of affinity.

Prerequisites of the Kinship System of Commoners

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175 It is not definitely known how the institutions of group marriage and linked lineages arose among Central Kerala Nayars. In 1518 Barbosa, writing of the Nayars of Calicut, stated of group marriage: "And it is said that the kings made this law, in order that the Nayars should not be covetous and should not abandon the king's service" (Dames, 1921: 124). Similarly João de Barros wrote at about the same period: "They say that this (polyandry) is a very ancient law among them, and that it springs from the wish of a certain king to relieve the men of the burden of maintaining sons, and leave them ready for warlike [671] service whensoever the king calls upon them" (*ibid.*: 241). Whether or not group marriage was instituted by a particular royal edict, we know that once it had begun it was enforceable by the laws of the Central kingdoms. Thus, according to at least one authority, a chief could compel a woman to receive as marital partners any of her en- [613] angar who wished to visit her (K. Kannan Nair, 1908: 186). The rights and duties of enangar in the administration of caste law were also sanctioned by the chief and, ultimately, by the king.

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184 Considerable literary evidence suggests that a form of group marriage similar to that of Central Kerala existed among Nayars in at least some of the chiefdoms of the kingdom of Travancore in Southern Kerala. K. M. Panikkar, it is true, has argued that Travancore Nayar women were never polyandrous (1918: 270–271). Other Malabari writers, however, responding to Panikkar's statement, have argued convincingly that they were (Aiyappan, 1932*a*, 1932*b*, 1934; Iyer, 1932). K. P. Padmanabha Menon, in particular, supports the view that traditionally Nayar women in both Central and Southern Kerala were "held in common, every woman belonging to all the members of the tribe, and resistance to any of them was severely punished." In support he quotes two early statements concerning the chiefdom of Venmani, with its capital of Kartigapally, in North Travancore. Thus the Portuguese Archbishop Menezes in the mid-sixteenth century reported that "the king of Kartigapally enacted that in his kingdom any Nair was at liberty to be free with any woman of the caste high or low, and that he could kill a woman, with impunity, if she refuses

595 182 701 [566] Leaving aside the problem of origins, however, what I would argue is that the *specific* form of group marriage evolved among Central Kerala Nayars in the period of the native kingdoms was particularly adapted to their military organization, which in turn was made possible by the existence of the lower castes of sub-tenants and serfs. The work of the tenants and serfs absolved Nayar men from the duty of maintaining the women and children of either their natal or their conjugal units by their own productive activities. It set free most of these men for a lifetime of military service; in each matrilineal group only one old man was needed at home to organize the work of the household's retainers. Given matrilineal descent and inheritance, and given the mobility of men and the absence of male economic obligations to kinswomen, there was no reason why either men or women should restrict themselves to particular spouses. There was also, as the early European writers realized, a positive value for the kingdom in their not doing so, for plural marriages discouraged soldiers from forming deep attachments to particular wives and children, and encouraged them to focus their loyalty on military leaders and on the matrilineal groups through which they were recruited. At the same time, plural marriages provided the soldiers with ready comforts and a night's lodging both in their own villages and in other villages of the kingdom through which they might pass. Whether or not chiefs regularly enforced indiscriminate mating among Nayar women of their districts in order to strengthen their soldiers' allegiances, a system of group marriage involving optional multiple alliances certainly fitted the way of life of a landed militia, already (for historical reasons) [178] organized into matrilineal descent groups. A close connection between group marriage and the military organization is further suggested in that, after the British had disbanded the armies in about 1800, although matrilineal descent persisted for over a century, group marriage rapidly died out. Within about thirty years monogamous marriage in Central Kerala, and monogamous or restricted, fraternally polyandrous marriage in Travancore, had become common, and fathers had assumed a definite role in the upbringing of their children.

Kinship in the Aristocratic Matrilineal Castes

● 613 THE LINEAGE

592 423 Among the retainer Nayars a household whose membership rose above about thirty tended to divide its property between its segments when the senior males who had spanned the segments were dead. Correspondingly, lineages and clans of retainer Nayars went through a grad-

ual process of fission. This state of affairs was in harmony with the 613 small amounts of land controlled by retainer property groups and 592 with the relatively temporary relationship of retainer Nayars to their 423 land. The conditions of kānam tenure not only allowed for changes in the tenures of plots of land within one village, but even permitted segments of an expanding taravād to change their feudal allegiances and if necessary to hive off from their natal village.

The situation was different in the aristocratic lineages of royalty and district chiefs. By jenmam right they owned large domains which could support greater numbers of members. Their members also had a stake in the political office which they were reluctant to surrender. On the whole these lineages tended to cohere for longer periods than did those of retainers. Some of them today number over three hundred members and trace their descent back to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. When segments of these lineages did move away from their [727] ancestral lands it was usually because they had been conquered and forced to vacate their territories and offices.

In the beginning, when one of these aristocratic lineages rose to power, it did so as a small property group. It did so either (in the case of royals) through conquest or (in the case of chiefs) through being appointed to office by some royal power. When they acquired office these upstart property groups seem to have severed ties with their former lineages and clans and to have conferred on themselves a higher ritual rank as independent castes.

After a few generations such a property group might expand in 613 numbers and separate out into segments. I lack data on the precise point at which aristocratic property groups segmented; it seems to have been always at a later point with them than with retainer Nayars. (Today, some royal and chiefly property groups have a time depth of eight or more generations and over a hundred members.) When fission did occur the segments moved into separate palaces, each taking a portion of the ancestral domain for its maintenance. The oldest man resident in each segment acted as kāranavan and managed its internal affairs. For a time at least, the political office remained vested in the oldest man of the lineage irrespective of branch. When he was able, he kept a tight hold over all the segments, deflecting part of their income to himself for the upkeep of his palace staff, private army, and the larger forces he mustered through his subordinate vassals in war. The office bearer also retained sole right to the customs [651] dues on trade within his chiefdom or kingdom, and to the tribute from village headmen within his area of rule.

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Theoretically, office-bearing lineages were supposed to cohere forever, the officer being the eldest man of the lineage regardless of branch. In fact, if the lineage continued to expand, some other development would occur within a few generations. What its pattern might be depended on the economic and political circumstances of the times. One pattern was for the political office itself to become divided between the segments some time after they had divided their private domain. The head of each segment would then become ruler in his own right over a portion of the original territory, either (in the case of royals) as an independent small king, or (in the case of district chiefs) as a small chief independent of the rest of his lineage but still owing nominal allegiance to the original king of the kingdom as a whole. This type of fission of offices took place in areas and periods in which for some reason trade was declining, customs dues were running low, and neither king nor chiefs could muster enough extra wealth to fight wars which would maintain them in full political control. This 613 process went on apace from the fifteenth century to the end of the 178 seventeenth both in Kolattunad and in Travancore, the northernmost 175 and southernmost kingdoms of Kerala. They had been powerful 648 kingdoms for a period, with the help of Chinese traders, but declined in the fifteenth century after the Chinese trade collapsed and the Arabs built up Calicut. After 1500, different trading powers supported the smaller chiefs of these areas in trade wars against each other, so that these kingdoms remained weak and disunited until the second quarter of the eighteenth century. During this period segments of the royal lineages in both kingdoms carved up much of each kingdom into virtually independent chiefdoms. Within each of these in turn, the lineages of formerly subordinate Nayar chiefs tended also to break into segments, each retaining control over four or five villages. Early in the eighteenth century the British and French each tried to consolidate North Malabar by allying themselves with different local powers, but their struggles were temporarily eclipsed by invasions from Bednur to the north and later, in the 1760's, from Mysore in the east. In Travancore the process of disintegration persisted until the British obtained a trade monopoly and, in the 1730's, helped the king to reconquer his kingdom once and for all and to establish a bureaucratic form of rule (Innes, 1908: 55–75; Pillai, 1940: 266–466; K. M. Panikkar, 1931: chap. V).

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The other course of development was for one branch of a ruling lineage to seize the office and most of the private domains and, temporarily or permanently, exclude or banish the others. This process

took place in areas and periods where one trading power was in the 613
ascendant and wished to support a strong ruler with taxes, arms, and 669
shipping, and through him to gain a monopoly of the pepper trade.
Such maneuvers went on continually in the Cochin lineage during the
period of European trade. In the late fourteenth or early fifteenth 175
century the Cochin lineage disintegrated into five property groups.
The Zamorins to the north, who were expanding with Arab aid, supported 613
the Mutta ("Elder") branch, installed its head as king, and 669
made him feudatory to Calicut. When the Portuguese arrived in 1500 648
they took up the cause of the Elaya ("Younger") branch, installed
them as kings, and ousted the Elder branch and the Zamorin. By 1656
the Younger branch was dying out, as were the three other branches,
and only the Elder branch had members available for adoption. Instead
of allowing the king to adopt from the Elder branch as they
should by custom have done, the Portuguese forced him to adopt
from an unrelated lineage, the Rajas of Bettem, who ruled between
Cochin and Calicut and who had just defected to the side of Cochin.
The Elder branch then sought the help of the Zamorin and the Dutch,
and defeated the Cochin Raja and the Portuguese in the war of 1600.
The Dutch ousted the Portuguese from Cochin port and installed the
Elder branch as their protégés on the throne. Despite such machinations,
the Cochin kingdom never became permanently *divided* between
branches of the royal lineage, because the office of kingship,
supported by one or another merchant power, retained sufficient
funds, equipment, and men to restore control over the whole.

The Zamorin's lineage was unusual in that from at least the thirteenth 613
to the mid-eighteenth centuries it apparently did not greatly
expand in numbers or divide into separate property groups. Indeed
it several times almost died out and in 1705 had to adopt from the
Nileswaram lineage, an offshoot of Kolattiri. There were therefore no [635]
dynastic wars in Calicut. Even had there been, however, it is safe to
say that they would always have culminated in the supremacy of [726]
one branch and not in division of the kingdom. This was because
throughout the period the Calicut port remained great. With the help [648]
of one trading power after another the kingship remained strong and,
except for border losses, was able to maintain central judicial control
and a system of differentiated political offices within the heart of the
kingdom.

Within the Calicut kingdom, which was the strongest until the mid-eighteenth 635
century, dynastic disputes among the district chiefs were 578
usually settled by the king. Succession to district chiefship and to vil-

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613 Succession to district chiefship and to vil-
635 lage headships had to be ratified by the king and he could if neces-
sary dispossess disaffected branches and exclude them from office.
622 This was true in the heart of the kingdom. Between Calicut and
726 Cochin, the Zamorins' perpetual enemy, lay several small chiefdoms
ruled by formerly independent Kshattriya lineages owing only a tenuous allegiance to one or the other side. In the perennial wars between Calicut and Cochin disaffected branches of these lineages frequently changed sides.

622 Village headmen's lineages, again, had their successions confirmed
635 by the chief or king to whom they owed immediate allegiance. When
a property group divided into segments, the tendency seems to have
634 been for the branch having the senior member to retain the ancestral
613 house, the office, and most of the village domain. The king or chief
sometimes installed a discarded branch of such a lineage in a vacant office elsewhere, if the office-bearing lineage of that village had died out. His power to do this rested on the fact that an office-bearing lineage which was dying out could not adopt without the consent of the officer of next higher rank. Lopped branches of village headmen's lineages which lost their domains and office seem to have reverted in time to the caste rank of retainer Nayars.

613 In most of the royal lineages and many of the chiefly lineages there
554 existed the institution of *sthānams*. These were titles carrying separate estates and sometimes subordinate political offices for the men next in seniority to the ruler, irrespective of branch. The Zamorin's lineage had five sthānams. The first was the Zamorin who had palaces at Calicut and Ponnani. Second came a *sthāni* (title holder) who ruled as chief of Nedunganad, a large chiefdom near the southern boundary whose former ruler had been conquered and executed. The third sthāni regularly patrolled the southern frontier with an army. The fourth and fifth had no political offices but lived on separate estates. The rest of the lineage occupied one or more palaces in Calicut. When a sthāni died, those next below him in age rank all moved up one place. The ruling lineages of Kolattunad, Walluvanad, and Palghat each had five sthānis and many of the lesser chiefs had two or three. Cochin had no sthānis other than the king, but originally the eldest male of the lineage retired into celibacy while the second ruled as
[648] king. When the Portuguese came they abolished this rule and installed
the king themselves.

[183] When a ruling lineage was financially and militarily strong, sthānams
strengthened its rule and helped it to cohere for a longer time than it might otherwise have done. They lifted the senior men out of their

separate segments, gave them economic independence and a share in 613 the government, and made them representatives of the lineage as a 554 whole. If the lineage separated into two or more branch property groups, their estates were managed by their senior men after the sthānis had been removed. The whole lineage might thus cohere for a number of generations. When, however, taxes ran low and the political offices became financially weak, the sthānis had a tendency to revert to the property groups from which they came and, as heads of them, to seek independent rule over a portion of the chiefdom or kingdom. Sthānams were thus an integrative device which developed when a ruling lineage was already strong. They could not maintain its strength if the economic basis of its power was removed, nor could they ultimately prevent disputes of the branches for the central office if the lineage became very large.

RELATIONS BETWEEN ARISTOCRATIC LINEAGES 613

Each office-bearing lineage had as its enangar one or two higher-ranking lineages from the range of those within which its women were 634 wont to draw visiting husbands. Thus village headmen often had their 622 district chiefs as enangar. A district chief's lineage might have the 554 royal lineage, a conquered royal lineage, or a Nambudiri Brahman family as enangar. The Calicut royal lineage had two conquered royal feudatory lineages as enangar, and some other royal lineages had Nambudiri Brahman families. The enangar fulfilled the usual ceremonial obligations at life-crisis rites, and tied the tālis of girls. Unlike those among the retainer Nayars, these enangar obligations were not reciprocal. A district chief's lineage might thus receive enangar services from royals, but would give them to village headmen. Appropriately, the enangar relationship among aristocrats, like the marriage relationship, was thus asymmetrical. Unfortunately I lack information about whether aristocratic enangar, like those of retainers, had the right to bring to trial offenders against the religious laws of caste.

It is clear that hypergamous marriages and asymmetrical enangar 618 relations were adapted to the potential political and ritual mobility [582] of office-bearing lineages and to the fact that at any given time such a lineage might not be able or willing to acknowledge others as its equals in political or ritual rank. In most situations therefore an office-bearing lineage could act as though it formed a separate caste. There were some contexts, however, in which this was not possible. One of these was adoption. If a lineage was obliged to adopt, it had to find 613 some other lineage whose members it was willing to acknowledge as 577 peers. This problem was usually surmounted by adopting from a lin-

613 eage with which one was neither at enmity nor in regular asymmetrical
597 political relationships. Thus the Travancore royal lineage several
times adopted from Kolattiri, at the other end of Kerala, and the Calicut
lineage from Nileswaram, the northernmost independent chiefdom
of the Malabar Coast.

613 The giving and receiving of food, normally a hallmark of caste ranking,
262 presented other problems. Some royal lineages were vegetarians
564 and employed Nambudiri Brahman cooks who, being ritually higher
than themselves, were permitted to serve them with food. Others seem
to have drawn to themselves a small group of lineages as cooks and
houseservants upon whom they conferred equivalence of caste rank,
while maintaining them as their social inferiors and not intermarrying
with them.

613 RESIDENCE AND KINSHIP RELATIONSHIPS

592 The property groups of village headmen's and chiefly lineages had
593 residential arrangements similar to those of retainer Nayars, except
that their houses were larger. The men of these groups visited their
554 lower-ranking wives in the latters' homes. If they lived nearby, visits
would occur at night; if at a distance, the husband might visit his
wife about once a month and remain for two or three days. Similarly,
women of these groups received visits from their higher-ranking husbands
at convenient intervals. If he came from a distance the husband
brought his own servants and cook, occupied a building near the
taravād house, and stayed at his conjugal family's expense.

613 In the royal lineages each property group occupied a large palace.
344 Within it each princess had her own suite of rooms in company with
her children under the age of fifteen. Princes over this age had private
554 rooms in a separate wing. The Nambudiri Brahman husbands of princesses
592 (who were younger sons in their own households and had
no managerial duties) lived at the palace for the duration of their
marriages and were maintained at its expense. In the daytime they
occupied a building within the royal courtyard, with its own bathing
pool, kitchen, and servants, and visited their wives' rooms mainly at
night. Junior princes visited their wives in nearby retainers' households
or in more distant chiefly taravāds. Each royal sthāni had his
own palace, estate, and retainers for the duration of his office. He
would normally bequeath a house to a Nayar wife within the palace
grounds and visit her and his children there.

595 Although group marriage appears to have existed in theory among
554 aristocrats, polyandry was in fact perhaps less common than among
[586] retainer Nayars. Princesses are said to have been sometimes poly-

000 between men as well as preventing incestuous relations between the sexes.

Kinship Terms

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As might be expected, kinship terms were used only between matrilineal kin and between ego and the spouses of members of his lineage. The terms were as follows.

A. MATRILINEAL KIN (extended throughout the lineage)

(1) *Mūttassi* ("Oldest woman"). M. and F. speaking. Woman of the second ascending generation, primarily MoMo. May be prefaced by *valiya* ("big") or *cheriya* ("small") for women respectively older or younger than MoMo.

(2) *Ammāman* ("Male mother"). M. and F. speaking. Men of first and second ascending generations, primarily mother's own brother. May be prefaced by valiya or cheriya for men of first ascending generation respectively older or younger than Mo. May be prefaced by *mūtta* ("oldest") for men of second ascending generation.

(3) *Amma*. M. and F. speaking. Women of first ascending generation, primarily own mother. Prefaced by valiya or cheriya for women respectively older or younger than Mo.

(4) *Jyēshtan*. M. and F. speaking. Men of own generation older than ego, primarily own elder brother. Sometimes corrupted to *ētan*.

(5) *Anujan*. M. and F. speaking. Men of own generation younger than ego, primarily own younger brother. Reference only.

(6) *Jyēshtatti*. M. and F. speaking. Women of own generation older than ego, primarily own elder sister. May be corrupted to *eraṭṭi* (South Malabar) or *chēchi* (Cochin).

(7) *Anujatti*. M. and F. speaking. Women of own generation younger than ego, primarily own younger sister. Reference only.

(8) *Angala*. F. speaking. Own brother by same mother. Reference only.

(9) *Pengal*. M. speaking. Own sister by same mother. Reference only.

(10) *Marumakan*. M. speaking. Male of first or second descending generations, primarily own sister's son. Reference only.

(11) *Marumakal*. M. speaking. Female of first or second descending generation, primarily own sister's daughter. Reference only.

(12) *Makan*. F. speaking. Male of first descending generation, primarily own son. Reference only.

(13) *Makal*. F. speaking. Female of first descending generation, primarily own daughter. Reference only.

(14) *Pērakutti* ("Name child"). F. speaking. Male or female child

of second descending generation, primarily own daughter's child. Reference only. 601 613

(15) *Kāranavar* (singular, *kāranavan*). M. and F. speaking. All males of the lineage older than ego, living or dead. Primarily, the eldest living man of ego's property group. Reference only. [561]

(16) *Anandravar* (singular, *anandravan*). M. speaking. All males of the lineage younger than ego. Primarily, junior males of ego's property group. Reference only. [561]

Comment: Older relatives are addressed by terms; younger, by name.

The overriding of generations which appears in terms 2, 10, and 11 is suitable because the men under 2 are not in the direct line of ascent and their authoritative roles are similar. Terms 15 and 16 further emphasize the age rank of lineage males regardless of segment or generation. [561]

The separation of terms 1 and 3 may be related to the fact that women are in a direct line of descent. Moreover, 1's role is more authoritative than that of 3.

The existence of special terms 8 and 9 points up the interdependence of own brother and sister on which the unity of the sibling group and the cohesion of the property group are based.

The merging of lineals and collaterals within each generation points up the lack of institutional segregation of one woman and her children.

B. AFFINES AND NON-MATRILINEAL COGNATES 601

(1) *Bhārya*. M. speaking. Wi in the sambandham relationship. Reference only.

(2) *Bartāvu*. F. speaking. Hu in the sambandham relationship. Reference only.

(3) *Sambandhakkar*. M. and F. speaking. Collective. Husbands of women of ego's lineage, primarily of ego's property group. Reference only.

(4) *Mūttacchan* ("Oldest father"). M. and F. speaking. Hu of A1.

(5) *Acchan*. M. and F. speaking. Hu of A3, especially of own mother. May be prefaced by valiya or cheriya according to age of the man's wife in relation to ego's mother. Followed by the caste title (e.g., Nambudiri) if he is of higher caste.

(6) *Ammāyi*. M. and F. speaking. Wife of A2.

(7) *Aliyan*. M. speaking. Reciprocal between a man and his wife's lineage kinsmen of her generation, primarily within her property group. Reference only.

(8) *Jyēshtatti Amma*. Wife of A4. M. and F. speaking. Sometimes

terms. When one of these terms applies to more than one relative the 601
equation issues simply from the equation of the matrilineal kin who are their spouses.

There was a lack of terms for affines younger than ego because un- [561]
less sex difference caused ego to avoid them completely, the principle of age rank made it possible to address them by name. Descriptive compound terms were adequate to refer to them.

However, the existence of the special reciprocal reference term between brothers-in-law points up the uniqueness of the brother-sister tie and the fact that a woman's brothers and her husband were brought into a specially close relationship by virtue of their claims upon the woman who linked them.

The use of B3 as a collective term reflects the fact that, as sex partners and fathers, these men had a common interest in ego's matrilineal group and it in them.

MODERN CHANGES

Since about 1890, as I have described elsewhere (Gough, 1952), Nayar 595
marriage has become monogamous and men have assumed rights in and
obligations to their children. The matrilineage is gradually disinte- 178
grating and the elementary family is gradually emerging as the key [612
group in a system of bilateral, interpersonal kinship ties. 594]

As a result of these changes, terms formerly restricted to matri- 601
lateral kin are today sometimes used to address corresponding patri-
lateral kin, although this usage is not yet standardized. The most com- 178
mon equations are MoMo = FaMo, MoMoBr = FaMoBr, MoFa = FaFa, MoBr = FaBr, MoSi = FaSi, MoBrWi = FaBrWi, and MoSiHu = FaSiHu. Cross cousins and paternal parallel cousins still have no reference terms but if older are addressed as siblings. No other regular changes are observable for kin of ego's or ascending generations, and no regular changes have occurred in terms for descending generations.

As the system now stands, therefore, ego's matrilineal kin of the same sex are still merged within each generation, but the transferences to patrilateral kin have created a mixture between "lineal" and "generation" systems in the sense of Murdock and earlier writers, as far as the own and ascending generations are concerned (Murdock, 1949: 149). A "generation" classification is used for both sexes of ego's generation, with all cousins equated with siblings. A "generation" classification is also used for women of the first ascending generation, if we discount the age prefixes used to differentiate older and younger sisters of the parents. If we classify the age prefixes as constituting sep-

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marks that "When a high-caste Nayar becomes ripe, he turns into a 648 634
king." 635

Low productivity and poor communications perhaps made the exaction
of tribute more difficult than in Central Kerala, and this fact, 621
plus the uncertain nature of trade, made the local rulers perennially 634
short of funds. This is probably the reason why, although they were [651]
trained for warfare in gymnasia in their villages, Nayars were not
regularly conscripted into a national army. Instead, they merely fought [701]
sporadically on behalf of local chiefs. Further, chiefs and village headmen [622]
were insufficiently strong to bring all the land under their control.
Their domains were larger than those of Nayar commoners, but [613]
most commoner Nayar property groups were independent small landlords
in their own right within their villages. Since they were not [592]
full-time warriors and since in many areas they had no serfs, Nayar [423]
commoners also did part of their own cultivation on their small estates. [241]
Part of their land, however, they leased to Tiyyar tenants as in
Central Kerala. The polluting castes of village servants had the same [427]
rights and spatial distribution as in Central Kerala. In general, the [564]
economic processes of reciprocity and redistribution in villages proceeded [437]
in a comparable manner.

As independent warrior-cultivators, the Nayar commoners were not 564
divided into separate castes of retainers owing allegiance as vassals 621
and *kānam* tenants to different kinds of lords. Most villages were nominally 613
under Nayar village headmen. In villages of the Kottayam and
Kadattunad kingdoms, both the headman's lineage and those of the 582
Nayar commoners belonged to a large caste called Nambiars, who appear to have intermarried throughout the kingdom. Although of the same general caste as commoners, and not forbidden by religious law from intermarrying equally with commoners, Nambiar village headmen's lineages tended, however, to intermarry only with each other or to take wives only from the commoners, occasionally giving their own women in marriage to chiefs or Brahmans. Chiefs claimed a higher caste rank as Samantan Nambiars, and royalty as Kshattriyas. These aristocratic lineages conducted hypergamous marriages with each other and with Nambudiris as in Central Kerela.

Judicial processes were somewhat less centralized than in the 692
Central kingdoms. At least in theory, grave crimes and civil disputes in urban centers seem to have been tried in royal courts, but most civil disputes inland were apparently tried by local chiefs. Under the chiefs, caste assemblies of neighborhoods took care of crimes against
religious law as in the Central kingdoms. Murder among Nayars 000

Murder among the Nayars
627 sometimes led to blood feuds between lineages (*ibid.*, I: 195–196).
613 Chiefs could usually cut short a feud between commoner lineages, but
628 even these feuds occasionally ran their course for a generation, although
cognatic and affinal ties between lineages helped to bring
them to a close. Greater feuds were sometimes waged between the
lineages of village headmen or chiefs of adjacent districts, in which
the commoner Nayars of each area might participate.

Matrilineal Units

614 THE CLAN

564 Among Nambiar commoners the largest matrilineal unit was the clan
(*vamsham* or *illam*). It had the functions of exogamy and mutual
hospitality. Common descent was merely stipulated and not demonstrated
and the order of segmentation within the clan was unknown.
[635] The clan might be dispersed throughout a kingdom or even, perhaps,
between kingdoms. Its members might point to a particular village as
their original ancestral site, but each clan seems to have been much
older and its history less clearly documented than among Nayar retainers
in Central Kerela. There is no doubt that clans became much
more dispersed in the nineteenth century than they had traditionally
been because of the development of new areas of cultivation and increased
mobility between villages. However, even traditionally the
clan seems to have had more members and a wider spread than in the
Central area. Its characteristics may be attributed to several factors.
First, Nambiars were not divided into separate retainer castes. Thus,
although the majority of commoner marriages were within the village,
[582] Nambiars did have greater freedom to marry and move more freely
between villages throughout the realm. Lacking a strong superordinate
political structure and internal caste differentiation to give form
to their relationships, they had larger kinship units. Newcomers to a village
probably did not need to become affiliated to its assembly by order
[608] of a superior political authority. Instead, they could probably affiliate
themselves with their clan fellows and so at once be provided also with
classificatory affines in other clans. Second, Nambiars practised
614 avunculocal residence; husband and wife lived in the husband's
564 matrilineal ancestral house (Buchanan, 1807: 513–514). Sons normally
591 moved back to their own matrilineal homes at puberty, but daughters
[425] moved to their husbands' homes. However, Nambiar fathers occasionally
gave privately acquired land to their wives and children
when they were able. The children might then settle permanently in

the father's village, if this was different from the mother's. In this 614
way, matrilineal kin might become widely scattered between many 564
villages, while remembering the village from which their matrilineal 591
forebears sprang.

THE SUB-CLAN

This group corresponded to the clan in Central Kerala. It was a 614
segment of the clan whose members seem to have been located within [634]
one chiefdom. The structure and functions of this group were identical [765]
with those of the clan in Central Kerala, the members observing death [844]
and birth pollutions as well as exogamy. [783]

THE LINEAGE

As in Central Kerala, the lineage was that portion of a clan located 613
in one neighborhood (tara). Traditionally there seem to have been
about six to ten lineages in one neighborhood, as in Central Kerala.
A lineage was internally segmented and segmentation was relevant
to the reversion of property. Exogamy, the observance of pollution, [783]
and the extension of kinship terms inhered in the lineage. Perhaps
because village headship was weaker than in Calicut and each commoner
lineage stronger as an organized group of kinsfolk, rites connected
with the lineage were more prominent in the North than in
the Center (Gough, 1958). There were few or no neighborhood [346]
temples of Bhagavadi. Instead, each lineage held a grand annual [796]
festival to its own patron Bhagavadi and to minor male deities, in [776]
which the lower castes took part. We have mentioned blood feuds [627]
between lineages, which indicate that a lineage was, in popular
thought, if not in law, considered responsible for its members' physical
protection.

Little is known today of the enangar relationship in North Kerala. 613
It did exist, and enangar are said to have attended life-crisis rites and 588
to have had some function in neighborhood caste trials of offenders
against religious law. However, enangar did not tie the tālis of immature
girls and did not participate in any form of group marriage.
Among Nambiars and in most of the aristocratic Nayar lineages a
girl's tāli was tied before puberty by some local Nambudiri Brahman.
He was often an old man, and he appears to have had no right of
cohabitation. The woman and her children did not observe pollution [765]
at his death. As far as I can judge the tāli rite in this area was merely [783]
an initiation rite which, at least in the nineteenth century, removed
the ritual danger of cohabiting with a virgin (Gough, 1955). It also [835]
instituted the etiquette associated with incest prohibitions between
the girl and her matrilineal kinsmen.

613 THE PROPERTY GROUP

564 422 423 [427] The property group, a segment of the lineage, was among Nambiar commoners of roughly the same size and internal composition as among the Nayar retainers of Central Kerala. Its members jointly owned both movable and immovable property in the same manner. Its kāranavan managed the estate, had legal guardianship over members, and was legally responsible for them to the local caste assembly and to the chief. All Nayar property groups appear to have owned some garden and rice lands as *jenmis.* In addition some leased land on kānam tenure from chiefs, royalty, or Brahmans if any were present in their village. A property group whose membership was expanding might bring under cultivation waste land belonging to the chief on a tenure known as *kurikānam.* The tenant had the right of occupancy for twelve years without paying rent; he then paid an annual share of produce to the landlord. The improvements he made (trees, houses, etc.) were his own and he could not be evicted without compensation for them.

613 591 [701] Residence was ideally *avunculocal.* Plural marriages for women were forbidden, and a man normally brought his wife to live with him on his matrilineal estate for the duration of the marriage. This mode of residence was apparently related to population density and to the sexual division of labor. Some duolocal marriages did exist between partners living in nearby houses in the same village. However, houses and villages were so scattered that most men would have had difficulty in maintaining a visiting relationship with a wife. Matrilocal residence was also disadvantageous because men did much of the work of cultivation on their own estates, were required to defend their estates against invaders, and were mobilized by the chiefs in war on the basis of property-group membership. A few junior men lived matrilocally for short periods, but the kāranavan and most of the adult men lived on their own estates.

613 592 [596] In the relatively small property groups of commoners, the dwelling group was thus often an avunculocal extended family. It would comprise a group of brothers, their wives and immature children, their adult sisters' sons, and the wives and small children of these men. Divorced or widowed women born into the property group also had the right of permanent residence there, and married women born into it might return to live there for several weeks or months when they wished.

In the larger property groups of some commoners, village headmen, and chiefs, the main ancestral house might be reserved for

divorced or widowed women of the group and their children, together 613
with temporarily divorced men or elderly widowers. The 592
kāranavan, his wife, and his immature children would occupy a wing
of the ancestral house or a separate building in the same courtyard.
Married men of the group would live with their wives and children
in separate houses, all on the matrilineal estate. The kāranavan would 613
then allocate separate gardens and rice fields for usufruct to each 423
married man. A junior would often hold such land on kānam tenure
from the taravād as a whole. The kāranavan would retain a larger 592
portion of the estate for his own maintenance and that of unmarried
persons living in the ancestral house. In any case he retained ultimate
management of the whole property and might retract portions of it at
will. If, however, a junior man leased new land from the taravād
on kurikānam tenure, the improvements he made on it might, by
custom although not by law, become the separate property of his
mother's matrilineal descendants. If, later, the whole property was
divided between major segments of the property group, each branch
might take as its share the fields and gardens on which improvements
had been made by male members of that branch. In the larger
aristocratic taravāds one or two sthānam estates might be set aside
for the men immediately junior to the kāranavan. Their holders
managed such estates with greater independence than the plots allocated
to more junior men. All cultivation was carried on with the [427]
aid of Tiyyar laborers attached by hereditary right to the taravād. In
some cases also plots were given on sub-tenure to Tiyyar cultivating
tenants in the same manner as in Central Kerala.

A man might also—at least in the nineteenth century—with the 613
consent of his own and his wife's kāranavan, lease land on kānam or 427
kurikānam tenure from his wife's taravād. A few junior men actually
went to live matrilocally in the wife's ancestral house or in a separate 423
house which they built on the wife's ancestral estate. Houses and improvements 591
to land provided by a husband in this way customarily
became the separate property of the wife and her matrilineal descendants.
Land on which such improvements had been made also [428]
normally passed to the wife's descendants as their share when the
whole property of the wife's taravād was finally divided. Matrilocal
residence by a junior man was rare and could always be objected to
by the man's kāranavan if his services were needed at home. However,
a man who was himself a kāranavan had considerable freedom
to build a house and develop new gardens on his wife's taravād
estate, which would later enrich his wife's matrilineal descendants. If

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613 the wife's taravād was near his own he might divide his time between
429 his own ancestral house and the private house he had built for his
591 wife and her descendants on her ancestral estate.

Although this was contrary to customary law, some men also managed
613 to give jenmam land outright to a wife and her matrilineal descendants,
431 thus founding a new branch taravād through the wife.
423 This practice greatly increased in the nineteenth century, when new
gardens were continually being developed on former waste land and
when land became freely marketable. In 1896, indeed, a law was
[671] finally passed enabling a man's wife and children to inherit half of
[428] his self-acquired intestate property (Malabar Marriage Act, 1896).
Occasional gifts of land to the wife and her descendants were, however,
known long before the British period, although they were
against the law. At the political level, kings and chiefs occasionally
gave large domains, together with the office of chief or village headman,
[634] to their wives' matrilineal descendants. The chiefships of both
[635] Nileswaram and Kadattunad are said to have been formed in this
way by gifts from Kolattiri kings before the fourteenth century; both
later became virtually independent kingdoms (Logan, 1951, I: 343;
Ayyar, 1938: 4). Many smaller territories and political offices were
similarly bequeathed during the period of European trade. On a
smaller scale, the kāranavan of a Nambiar taravād sometimes managed
to take out a portion of the fallow jenmam land of his own
taravād, cultivate it, and give it to his wife and her descendants.
[578] Naturally, such gifts, which were in no sense a part of acknowledged
lawful custom, led to disputes with the donor's matrilineal kin and
[627] sometimes, in the next generation, to feuds between lineages.

613 Gifts of land or improvements by a man to his wife's descendants
led to the existence of branch property groups, called *tāvari-taravāds*,
431 within the main property group. After the donor's death the wife's
423 kāranavan might manage such a small estate on behalf of her branch,
retaining the income separately for her and her children. More commonly,
592 the donor's eldest son became the kāranavan of the tāvari
property, while the branch also continued to receive its ancestral dues
out of the property of the taravād as a whole. When a stirpital division
of the whole taravād occurred, this branch might claim both
its separate estate and its share of the ancestral property. If the donor
had been a chief and the gift was large, the branch to which it was
given might, however, choose to leave its taravād without taking a
share of the ancestral estate and to found a new taravād home on its
new land. Tāvari-taravāds were, however, rare among commoners

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until the second half of the nineteenth century. Their existence before 431
1750 seems to have been chiefly associated with conquest of land by 423
chiefs. After the British conquest they became associated rather with 592
the gradual expansion of the population to newly cultivated lands,
and with the ability of men to acquire land as personal and freely [178]
marketable property. [648]

Recent Developments in North and Central Kerala Contrasted

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The modern North Kerala practice, whereby a man acquires newly 431
cultivated garden land and gives it to his wife and children, makes
Nayar residence heterogeneous at the present time. My data come [591]
from a village of Kottayam division where, in 1948, the great majority
of Nambiar men were small owner- or tenant-cultivators. It was found [114]
that out of 42 Nambiar houses, 23 (55 per cent) had been built by individual men and given to their wives and children. Only 45 per cent had been built in the traditional manner by a matrilineally related group of men for their taravād.

Regarding the constitution of households, it was found that 29 per 592
cent were "traditional," avunculocal extended family households 178
comprising matrilineally related men, their wives, and small children, with or without divorced or widowed mothers or sisters of these men; 48 per cent contained an elementary family with or without another relative of either husband or wife—a widowed mother, unmarried sibling, etc.; 14 per cent contained a widow or divorcee with her unmarried children; 7 per cent contained a segment of a lineage —a group of matrilineally related men *and* women of the Central Kerala type, with the men visiting their wives in other households; 2 per cent (1 house) contained a man whose wife had just died, and the unmarried children.

Taking the residence of the 53 married couples by household, it 591
was found that 26 per cent lived in the traditional manner in the 178
matrilineal home of the husband. Some of these husbands were
kāranavans; others lived avunculocally with a mother's brother. 592
Fifteen per cent lived duolocally as in Central Kerala, with the husband visiting the wife. At least half, however, were couples in which the wife had recently had a child and was only temporarily living in her natal home; she would later return to her husband's matrilineal home, thus bringing the total percentage of couples in the husband's matrilineal home up to about 33 per cent. Six per cent lived patrilocally in the husband's father's private house, while 4 per cent lived

591 matrilocally in a home with the wife's mother and sometimes with
178 others of her older matrilineal kin. Twenty-six couples (49 per cent)
lived neolocally in a house provided by the husband and containing
592 no natal kin of either husband or wife. Of these 26 neolocally resident
couples, 6 (11 per cent) lived in a house which the husband had inherited
from his dead father; 3 (6 per cent of the total) lived in a
house which the husband had obtained from his taravād; 14 (26 per
cent) lived in a house newly built by the husband for his wife.

594 These figures may be contrasted with the modern picture in a
● 613 Central Kerala village, where the marketability of land and labor
178 have also brought about a partial disintegration of matrilineal descent
groups and an emergence of the elementary family as a residential
and economic unit. Both in Central and in North Kerala, moreover,
595 marriage has been compulsorily monogamous since the 1930's, men
656 have been legally obliged to maintain their wives and children, and
178 the whole of man's private intestate property has passed to his mother,
428 wife, and children at his death (Madras *Marumakkattāyam* Act, 1933;
Cochin Nayar Act, 1938; Nair, 1941: 306). In addition, it has now become
421 legally possible for the members of a taravād to divide their
matrilineal ancestral property on a per capita basis. Once the ancestral
613 property has been divided into individual shares in this way
178 it becomes private property in law and is heritable in the same manner
as are self-acquisitions. Both in Central and North Kerala, therefore,
economic change and resultant modern laws have combined to break
down traditional matrilineal descent groups.

425 In Central Kerala, however, population is denser and there has
178 been less waste land available for individual cultivation. Over the
past hundred years, therefore, when individual men have acquired
464 private plots, it has more often been through purchase of already
[761] cultivated land than through cultivation of virgin land. Further,
[701] Nayar men in Central Kerala, having been a professional militia,
tended after the disbanding of their armies either to remain noncultivating
owners and tenants or where possible to move into new
forms of salaried employment. Central Kerala today is more urbanized
than is North Kerala, so that a much greater proportion of Nayars
have salaried work in factories, as clerks, as government servants, as
schoolteachers, or in the armed services. Many are unemployed and
merely live from their ancestral lands. Particularly among retainer
Nayars, who are relatively poor, men have amassed less self-acquired
423 land than was possible for Nayar cultivators in North Kerala. More-
178 over, because Nayar men are often not themselves the cultivators of

their land, there has been a tendency—under the new law of division 423
of taravād property—for women and immature children to retain the 178
ancestral houses and much of the land and for men to take their individual shares of the property in cash. Thus, having left their [613]
taravāds with their shares, some men now find themselves living in a
house owned by the wife and her young children. Other men pool [425]
their share of property with that of the wife and jointly buy a new
garden and house. When the location of their work permits it, most [591]
men remain in their ancestral homes until middle age and visit their wives in the traditional manner.

Modern residential patterns in Central Kerala, although moving in 178
the direction of autonomy for the elementary family, thus show a [594]
different bias from that seen in North Kerala. Our contrast is made
with data from a Cochin village three miles from a large town, where [464]
75 per cent of Nayars of retainer castes worked for wages in the
town. Here, out of 65 high-caste Nayar houses, 40 (61 per cent) had [342]
been built by kāranavans for their taravāds in the traditional manner; only 22 per cent had been built by a man for his wife and children, and 11 per cent had been built or bought jointly by husband and wife; 3 per cent had been built by a man for his private use, and 3 per cent by a woman for herself and her children.

Taking the constitution of households, we find that 46 per cent 592
contained matrilineage segments more or less of the traditional type, 613
except that one or more husbands of the women might live regularly 178
in the house. Seventeen per cent contained a "broken" matrilineage segment, the adult men of which had left their natal kinswomen, taken a share of the property in cash, and gone to live with their wives. In these houses the husbands of the remaining women might or might not be living with their wives. Twenty-nine per cent of the households were simple elementary families; 3 per cent contained only one man; 3 per cent contained an extended family composed of some modern mixture of matrilineal and patrilateral kin; and one house contained a widow with her small children.

Taking the residence of married couples by household, we find that 591
out of 100 couples, 58 lived duolocally, the husband dividing his time 592
between his natal home and that of his wife in the traditional manner. 178
In some cases the wife might occasionally move for a few weeks to live in the husband's natal home if circumstances made this particularly desirable. Such an arrangement was however very modern in Central Kerala; it was much disliked by women and was seldom resorted to. Eighteen of the couples lived matrilocally; the couple

591 shared a home with the wife's mother and sometimes with others of
592 her matrilineal elders. Twenty-four lived neolocally in a house containing
no natal kinsfolk of either partner; of these 24 couples, 7
178 lived in a private house acquired by the husband; 11 lived in a house
jointly acquired by husband and wife; and 6 lived in a house acquired
by the wife.

591 As these figures suggest, duolocality is still the accepted norm of
residence for younger married couples in Central Kerala, and avunculocality
178 slightly less so for those in North Kerala. In both areas
[434] participation in a market economy has caused a shift toward neolocality,
especially for middle-aged couples. In the North Kerala
village, however, the modern prevalence of cash-crop farming has
carried this tendency further than has small-scale urban wage work
[562] in the village in Cochin. At the same time, because of the coöperation
of North Kerala men in cultivation, the male sex normally determines
the pattern of residence. Couples live avunculocally, neolocally, or
591 even patrilocally because men must live on their land. In the Cochin
562 village, by contrast, the male shift from military to small-scale salaried
employment has only partially undermined the position of women as
464 the sex which remains on the ancestral land and for which the land
178 is cultivated by lower-caste servants. It is still women whose claims,
in the majority of cases, determine the choice of residence in Central
Kerala. Women, whenever possible, remain on their own land and
men adapt themselves to this condition by living duolocally, matrilocally,
or in some cases neolocally in a house partly provided by the
wife.

Kinship Relationships

613 MATRILINEAL KIN

576 The etiquette of behavior between matrilineal kin was traditionally
the same in North as in Central Kerala, but the emphases in terms of
rights and obligations were somewhat different.

The kāraṇavan's ultimate legal authority was much the same as in
the Central kingdoms. However, he lacked domestic authority over
women and their small children, who resided elsewhere. Among
[591] adults, avunculocal residence caused great emphasis to be placed on
the unity of the matrilineally related men, who should coöperate
in work and property management for the good of the taravād as a
whole. Covertly, their relationships tended to be rivalrous and hostile.
Open disputes between them were often avoided through the separate
allocation of plots to individual men. The distance thus created be-

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tween them also permitted the observance of the type of very formal 576
etiquette that existed in the Central kingdoms.

A peculiarity of strict avunculocal residence is that it separates 591
a woman from both her sons and her daughters after they are married. 593
The sons return to their ancestral estates and the daughters leave
with their husbands. The relationships of mother and children were
therefore less continuous than in Central Kerala. However, various 591
particular arrangements did often permit women to live with some 582
of their children for a great part of their lives. Cross-cousin marriage
was one of these. Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage was the most
popular, because by this means the daughter of a kāranavan and his
wife could be brought into their dwelling group as the wife of the
kāranavan's nephew. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage was also popular
but less common.[1] It was less advantageous unless a shift from
the normal residential arrangements could be made. This sometimes
occurred when a kāranavan succeeded in arranging a marriage between
his son and his sister's daughter. The son might then remain on
his father's ancestral estate for part of his life in patrilocal residence.
Any property which he developed there would pass to his wife's [428]
descendants as matrilineal heirs of the estate. In this way a woman [593]
might keep one of her sons living with her for a large part of her life.

Women were also commonly reunited with their sons at divorce or 591
widowhood, for they would then return to their taravāds to live. 593
Whatever the circumstances of residence, moreover, a man should
place his duties to mother and sisters above those to wife and children.
The ideals of devotion and reverence to matrilineal kinswomen were
the same as in Central Kerala. Brother and sister were drawn apart
by the normal rules of residence but, like mother and son, came together
if the sister were divorced or widowed and returned to her
taravād. A woman also returned to her taravād for several months at [844]
the time of childbirth, for every child had to be born in its own
taravād.

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[1] In the Kottayam village already cited, 12 per cent of Nambiar commoner
women who had been married had at some time married their father's own or
classificatory sister's son; 8 per cent had married their own or classificatory maternal
uncle's son. Cross-cousin marriage is, as everywhere in Kerala, more common
among the aristocratic lineages of village headmen and chiefs. Of the women of
six village headmen's lineages over a period of five generations, 17 per cent had
married their father's own or classificatory sister's son, and 13 per cent their own
or classificatory maternal uncle's son. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage is thus more [593]
usual in North than in Central Kerala. One reason for this is that fathers in North [584]
Kerala more commonly educate and endow their sons. By this means a father acquires [184]
the right to a voice in arranging his son's marriage, often to the father's
niece.

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574 taravād. A woman might also visit for several weeks each year.
Brother and younger sister, like a man and his sister's daughter, observed
[593] rules of partial avoidance—associated with incest prohibitions
[604] —during their periods of co-residence.

591 Sisters were always separated upon marriage, for the Nayars of
this area, unlike those to the south, forbade the marriage of two
582 brothers to two sisters. They say that such marriages would endanger
the unity of the brothers' taravād by introducing into it too strong a
● 613 contingent from another lineage (Gough, 1952). Sisters were together,
591 however, during childhood in their father's house, and were often
[593] reunited in old age when they went back to the taravād. Although
they might seldom have stayed there during childhood and early
[763] youth, women seem usually to have died in their matrilineal ancestral
homes. A woman was often widowed in old age. Alternatively
[586] she might elect to leave her husband and return to her taravād and
[764] sons when her period of childbearing was ended. In any case a
woman's body had to be cremated and her funeral rites performed
in the garden of her taravād house.

Women in avunculocal residence were partly maintained by their
[431] husbands' taravāds in return for domestic services. Nevertheless, important
distributive ties persisted between them and their matrilineal
kinsmen. Usually their kāranavan sent quantities of grain and clothing
to them and their children twice annually after the harvests as part
of their maintenance.

585 MARRIAGE

[582] Following the tāli rite, a girl entered into a marriage relationship
(sambandham) with one man at about the age of eleven. The father's
sister's son, if of suitable age, was considered the rightful claimant.
[686] If the girl did not marry him her kāranavan must pay a token fine to
him at the marriage ceremony. The giving of the cloth by the
husband which marked the start of a sambandham was carried out
with ceremony in the girl's ancestral house and was the occasion for
a large feast to relatives of both parties. After the marriage had been
consummated in the girl's house the couple were ceremonially conducted
to the bridegroom's taravād and the girl was formally received
into it by her husband's mother and his kāranavan's wife.

[684] While a marriage endured the husband had exclusive rights in his
wife's sexuality. If he detected her in adultery he might by custom
[848] kill her lover, cut off the hair of his wife, and send her home after
divorce. A woman was not, however, excommunicated from caste

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and her children were not illegitimate unless she had relations with 684
a man of low caste. 848

A woman normally lived with her husband in his ancestral home
or in a separate house on his ancestral land. He then owed her physical 593
protection and at least a part of her food and clothing, in return for [591]
limited domestic services. Occasionally a man might choose to visit
his wife in her ancestral home if she lived nearby. In this case he
might work on her ancestral land or bring periodic provisions of
grain and clothing to her and her children. He would eat sometimes [264]
in his ancestral house and sometimes in the house of his wife. In all [844]
marriages a husband was obliged to pay the full expenses of delivery
when his wife bore a child in her ancestral home and, additionally, [613]
to supply grain and other food to her throughout the six months which [431]
she spent in her taravād at this time.

A woman owed respect and obedience to her husband. He had the
right to scold or even to beat her if she disregarded his wishes.
Polygyny was permitted and was fairly common among village headmen, [595]
chiefs, and royalty. The polygynous husband usually provided
separate houses for his wives on his ancestral estate.

Theoretically, either party might divorce the other at will, but in 586
fact it was usually the husband who initiated a divorce. We do not
know how common divorce was in the traditional period. At present
it is rare in wealthy landowning lineages, although it probably takes
place rather more frequently than among aristocratic Mappillas of
North Kerala. It is more usual among the poorer Nambiar commoners,
although probably less frequent than among the poorer Tiyyars of
this area.

Widows might remarry freely by traditional law. Today it is some- 587
what rare for a widow to remarry if she has children under the age
of three or four; we do not know whether this was the case traditionally.
A widow who does remarry almost invariably leaves her [858]
children by the first marriage behind in her taravād, in the care of
her mother or some other older natal kinswomen. Such children may
visit their mother in their stepfather's house but they have no customary
rights of maintenance there, and it is considered that their
own taravād is the correct place for them to live.

Thus in North Kerala, by contrast with Central Kerala, differences 593
of paternity may create structural divisions among the children born 184
of one mother. All are of the same taravād and share the same funda- 858
mental birth-status rights, but if their fathers were different they [613]

593 will have had different life experiences. One set of siblings may receive
184 property from their father in which their maternal half-siblings
858 have no legal rights. Each set of full siblings will have important
relationships with its own paternal kin. In many respects, therefore,
● [613] children of the same mother by different fathers have a relationship
more comparable to that of the children of two sisters than to that
which obtains between full siblings. However, the ties between
maternal half-siblings are much stronger than those between paternal
half-siblings, who have only a slight relationship. At best, it may be
comparable to that between paternal parallel cousins; at worst it may
be one of open hostility.

768 A woman's claims on her husband's taravād ceased absolutely with
his death. As in Central Kerala, a widow was ceremonially conducted
613 out of her husband's house immediately after the death and could
[764] not enter it thereafter. Husband and wife did not observe death pollution
[783] and did not take part in each other's funeral rites.

Hypergamous marriages in aristocratic lineages bore some resemblance
591 to those in Central Kerala, although they were never
613 polyandrous. Brahman husbands of royal or chiefly women lived
matrilocally at the expense of the palace as in Central Kerala. Royal
184 and chiefly men, however, brought their lower-ranking wives to live
on their estates in avunculocal residence. The wife and her children
occupied a separate house or else a wing of the palace with separate
[783] cooking arrangements. Husband and wife observed rules of ritual
pollution as in hypergamous marriages in the Central kingdoms.

855 THE FATHER AND HIS KIN

The kāranavan held ultimate legal control over all his juniors, but
613 their fathers had limited customary rights in and obligations to them.
593 A man was expected to care for his children in his home until they
reached puberty or married. Although their own taravād had a legal
obligation to maintain them in food and clothing, the father's taravād
[867] customarily supplied their day-to-day needs as a matter of pride. The
father was expected to train his small children in manners and morals,
[868] to see that they were taught to write, and to give his sons instruction
in cultivation. In return he could ask his children to do small tasks,
593 could exercise domestic discipline while they stayed with him, and
613 could expect kindness and occasional help from them when he was
[584] old. His consent had to be sought for his children's marriages and he
often arranged the marriage of his daughter, although he could not
[431] override her kāranavan's wishes. Over and above their customary

obligations, some fathers, especially kāranavans, kept their children 593
residing with them for most of their lives and gave them property. A 613
child owed his father obedience and respect. If a man divorced his [431]
wife her children also left him and might see little of him thereafter. [586]
However, they had to observe ritual pollution at his death and his [765]
eldest son took part in his funeral rites along with the chief matrilineal
heir. The eldest son also made annual offerings to his dead father's [769]
spirit. In general the relationship with the father was thought of as
intimate and loving. Children must respect him and a daughter must
not touch him after her puberty. But having no legal authority, the
father was not feared. His role was sharply contrasted with that of
the mother's brother. Uncles were said to teach by scolding and [604]
punishment; fathers, by persuasion and laughter.

The father's kin had privileges and obligations at life-crisis rites— 613
most of which took place in the individual's taravād house—and were 796
feasted and made gifts at the ceremonies of first pregnancy, naming,
first rice feeding, tāli tying, marriage, first menstruation, and death. 553
At the naming ceremony, when a baby was one month old, the father's
mother chose the name, the father's father conferred it, and the father
presented the child with a gold waistband. The kāranavan fulfilled
these roles in Central Kerala.

A person was forbidden to marry his father's sibling or paternal 582
parallel cousin of the father's property group. Affectionate respect was 602
the proper attitude toward all the father's older kin. The paternal 603
grandmother played with a child but did not idolize him as she did
her daughter's child, for he was not of her taravād. Unless he was also
a child's kāranavan, the paternal grandfather was a distant kinsman
who had little to do with his grandchild. The mother's father, on the
other hand, usually doted on his grandchild and was a cherished
companion.

Male cross cousins had a joking relationship and were often close 605
companions. Their relationship might be tinged with hostility concerning
the property of their respective father and mother's brother. [578]
Sometimes, at least in the nineteenth century, they quarreled openly
over the inheritance and became enemies thereafter. Male and female
cross cousins had a joking relationship with implicit sexual privileges
if the girl was younger than the man. A boy who returned to his [582]
taravād at puberty often married his matrilateral cross cousin thereafter.
Even if she married someone else he might sleep with her [836]
illicitly before or after the marriage. Elders were either ignorant or [837]

605 oblivious of these affairs. If the husband found out he might keep
836 quiet or might divorce his wife, but he would not be likely to take
837 vengeance.

AFFINES

602 The etiquette of behavior between affines was practically identical
576 in North and Central Kerala, but in the North they had recognized
184 obligations.

During her marriage a woman became partly integrated into her
602 husband's property group. Her husband could request her to cook and
592 do limited domestic work for any of his matrilineal kin. She would
do so regularly if she lived in an avunculocal extended family. In
● 613 such households there was a certain authority structure between the
[593] wives of matrilineally related men, based on the relative age of the husbands. The oldest woman directed the group and the younger ones should obey her. Matters went most smoothly when a woman was the mother of her husband's niece-in-law. Older women in avunculocal households did not, however, have the unequivocal authority over junior wives which is found in the patrilocal extended families of the higher patrilineal castes of India. They would never beat a girl and usually courted her affection. If the young wife was dissatisfied she might urge her husband to move to a separate house, go home for long periods, or even seek a divorce.

In strict avunculocal residence the kāranavan's wife had domestic authority, keeping the keys of storerooms and directing the younger wives. However, if any woman born into the taravād returned to live in it she could demand the internal management of the home as
[598] a right. The relations between a woman and her husband's sisters and
nieces were thus often strained. Soon after such a natal kinswoman
[607] returned to her home in this way, the kāranavan would try to move his
[604] wife into a separate building to avoid feminine disputes. However, a
younger wife often lived for several years in the same house with her husband's widowed mother and was expected to obey her with good grace.

602 A woman and her husband's older matrilineal kinsmen avoided one
613 another—except on ceremonial occasions—because of incest prohibitions. She was accorded meticulous respect by her husband's younger matrilineal kin, who usually feared and resented her influence over her husband. Gruesome proverbs told of the tortures which men and women would like to inflict on the wives of their elder brothers and
[604] uncles, and it was said that "If the uncle's wife and nephews sit down
peaceably together, *nux vomica* and bitter gourds will turn to honey."

The wives of her elder matrilineal kinsmen figured prominently in the life-crisis rites of a girl, performing the ritual acts done by enangar women in Central Kerala. 602 613 796

Because of residence patterns men had less contact than did women with the property groups of their spouses. They must be invited to all ceremonies and had ritual duties in those connected with their own children. As sambandhakkar of a property group, the husbands of its female members were usually consulted formally by its kāranavan before he undertook important matters such as building houses or dividing property. He was not, however, obliged to follow their advice. 613 602

Kinship Terms

A. MATRILINEAL KIN

601 184

The pattern of terms was the same as in Central Kerala. Lexically, the only difference was that MoMo and her sisters (A1) were called *acchamma* (literally, "father's mother"), a term extended to them from FaMo. This usage probably resulted from the fact that a child normally recognized FaMo earlier than MoMo and had more contact with her.

B. AFFINES AND NON-MATRILINEAL COGNATES

In North Kerala, as might be expected, there were customary kinship terms for the patrilateral kin. The terms for affines and non-matrilineal cognates were as follows.

(1) *Bhārya*. M. speaking. Wi. Reference only.

(2) *Bartāvu*. F. speaking. Hu. Reference only.

(3) *Sambandhakkar*. M. and F. speaking. Collective. Husbands of women of ego's lineage, primarily of ego's property group. Reference only.

(4) *Acchappan* ("Father's father"). M. and F. speaking. FaFa and FaFaBr. FaFaSiHu, FaMoBr, FaMoSiHu. MoFa and MoFaBr. MoFaSiHu, MoMoSiHu.

(5) *Acchamma* ("Father's mother"). FaMo and FaMoSi. FaFaBrWi, FaFaSi and FaMoBrWi. MoFaSi, MoMo, MoMoSi, MoFaBrWi.

(6) *Amma* ("Mother"). M. and F. speaking. Extended from Mo and MoSi to FaSi and FaBrWi. FaSi is called *valiya* ("big") mother or *elaya* ("younger") mother according to her age in relation to the father. FaBrWi is so designated according to FaBr's age in relation to Fa.

(7) *Acchan*. M. and F. speaking. Fa, mother's current husband,

[P. 446]

CULTS OF THE DEAD AMONG THE NĀYARS

By E. Kathleen Gough

121 IN this paper I shall attempt both a sociological and a psychological analysis of Nāyar cults of the dead. That is to say, I shall try to relate the role-structure and social functions of the cults to those of legal and economic institutions, and to relate the emotional content of the cults to that of certain relationships among the living.

613 The Nāyars[1] are a high, matrilineal caste of landholders and salaried workers.
564 Some four to seven matrilineal lineages of commoner Nāyars traditionally occupied
101 the high caste area of a village. They served a Nāyar or Nambūdiri Brahman village
headman, and had authority over tenants, artisans, and serfs of lower caste. The lineage was exogamous, had a depth of about ten to fifteen generations and was concerned in village government. But the more significant economic unit was a lineage segment (*taravād*), whose members jointly owned property including an ancestral house. The eldest man of this group was its legal guardian (*kāranavan*).

635 Before British rule began in 1792, the Malabar Coast comprised a number of
175 kingdoms. I am concerned with Nāyars of villages in the former Cochin kingdom,
in the center of the coast, and with those of villages in the former Kottayam kingdom
121 in the north.

In Cochin, the country was relatively flat, fertile, and densely populated. The
105 Nāyars were the professional military caste. For a part of each year they tended to be
184 absent from the village in military training or war. Women remained on their ancestral
[133] estates under the legal guardianship of the *kāranavan* and were maintained by the
[595] work of tenants and serfs. Probably largely as a result of the relatively mobile military
occupation of the men, plural marital unions were customary. A woman might have
six or eight husbands of her own or a higher subcaste, and a man, any number of
[591] Nāyar wives of his own or a lower subcaste. Residence was duolocal: spouses lived
separately in their natal homes and a husband visited his wife in her home at night.
[851] Exact physiological paternity was, clearly, often unknown, and in any case a man had
[594] no rights in nor obligations to his children. Among Nāyars of this area, therefore,
contrary to Murdock's generalization,[2] the elementary family was not institutionalized
[114] as a legal, economic or residential unit.

In Kottayam, the terrain was mountainous and jungly, the area more sparsely
[133] populated, and the kingdom less centralized. The Nāyars were cultivating landowners
[597] and only occasional warriors. The hilly and jungly terrain and the sparsity of population
made duolocal residence impracticable. In most cases a man took his wife to live in
his ancestral household in avunculocal residence, and children were brought up until
[595] adolescence in the houses of their fathers. There was some polygyny, but polyandry
was forbidden. Fathers had morally though not legally recognized rights in and

obligations to their children and a strong affective bond with them. The *Karanavān* 105
of their lineage segment was however the authority in important matters. 184

Both in Kottayam and in Cochin, Nāyar women were occasionally married to 105
men of the highest, patrilineal caste of Nambūdiri Brahmans. Children of such unions
were Nāyars, and rules of ritual pollution maintained distance between them and their 564
higher caste fathers. The Nambūdiri father might not eat with his wife and children, 582
and might not touch them during the daytime while in a state of ritual purity. Only [184]
the eldest son of a Nambūdiri house might marry a Nambūdiri wife and beget children
for his own family.

British rule brought about the collapse of the Nāyar armies early in the nineteenth 105
century. Probably as a result of this change, plural marriages gradually died out in 177
Cochin. The lineage system persisted with little change until the turn of the century, 178
but in both areas the employment of men in professional and wage work led to the [613] ●
development of privately owned property in addition to property owned jointly by
the matrilineal group. The Malabar Marriage Act of 1896 permitted men to register [656]
their marriages and gave the children of such marriages rights in half the personal [421]
property of the father after his death. During this century, the greatly increased
employment of men in salaried work, and the development of cash-crop farming, [964]
have brought about a partial disintegration of the matrilineage, and have tended
toward the emergence of the elementary family as an economic and legal unit. Under 105
the pressure of these changes, laws[3] were passed in 1933 and 1937 which required all 177
men to register their marriages, gave rights of maintenance to their wives and children, 178
and provided that the whole of a man's personal property be inherited by his wife
and children. In addition, the laws permitted, though they did not require, equal 421
division of the matrilineal estate on a per caput basis[4] between all members. Although [656]
some traditional households remain, it has now become fairly customary for a woman
and her immature children jointly to separate their shares of property from those of
the rest of their matrilineal group, and to set up a new establishment with the woman's
husband. He, in turn, may have abstracted his single share of property from that of
his own matrilineal group. Sometimes, the husband himself provides a new house
for his elementary family from his own share of property and his private earnings.
Sometimes the new house is provided from the property of the wife and children,
who receive their husband and father into it as a resident and wage earner. Sometimes
husband and wife pool their property and set up a joint establishment.

Given the modern heterogeneity of legal, economic, and residential arrangements, 769
and given also variations in education, interests, and life experience, it is not surprising 178
that cults of the dead reveal differential rates of change. I shall be chiefly concerned
with the traditional cults, although these persist without change in only a few of the [121]
more traditionally patterned households—actually, in fifteen percent of Nāyar
households in one Cochin village, and in thirteen percent in one village in Kottayam.

The Nāyars participate in three distinguishable categories of cults of the dead. 769
The first comprises a collective cult, by the matrilineal property group, of the ghosts
of matrilineal forebears, which I call lineage ghosts. This cult is non-Sanskritic. The 121
second category comprises various kinds of offerings by individuals to the spirits of 613
dead kinsfolk at funerals or on the anniversaries of deaths. These cults are Sanskritic
in origin. The third category comprises various cults of the ghosts of persons who
were not members of the Nāyar's own lineage; I call these alien ghosts. These cults,

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121 like the cult of lineage ghosts, are non-Sanskritic. I discuss the three categories of
613 cults in that order, and then refer briefly to modern changes in the cults.

The Cult of Lineage Ghosts

769 Each traditional Nāyar house contains a room devoted to lineage ghosts. Within
353 the shrine are placed small, low stools (*pīṭhams*). On each of these it is believed that
778 a particular ghost comes to sit on the days when offerings are made.

769 In property groups of the aristocratic lineages of village headmen and district
613 chiefs, which own more land than do commoner Nāyars, family histories recorded
554 in palm leaf documents may contain the names and achievements of twenty or more
[217] *kāranavans* extending back over two or three hundred years. In such lineages, whose
[778] property groups divide less frequently than do those of commoner Nāyars, the *kāranavans'* spirits are housed in a special building in the courtyard south of the ancestral house. Commoner Nāyars care somewhat less for their ancestry. Sometimes they have only three or four stools for their lineage ghosts and remember by name only those who died within the last hundred years or whose lives were in some way remarkable. Remarkable *kāranavans* are those who fought bravely in battles or received honor from chief or king, those who earned property on behalf of their matrilineal groups, or those who died prematurely through accident, murder, epidemic or suicide.

769 Regular offerings are made only to *kāranavans*, for only *kāranavans* hold legal
613 authority and only their names tend to appear in documents which survive for posterity.
782 On the advice of the astrologer, however, a *taravād* may, in emergency, propitiate the ghost of an ancestress or of a man who died before becoming *kāranavan*. But such ghosts are always those who died within the lifetime of living members.

769 The lineage ghosts are regularly propitiated[6] on the new moon days of Karkidagam
796 (July-August) and Tulām (October-November). Food is cooked in the kitchen by
613 women of the matrilineal household, and a large portion is placed on a plantain leaf
261 for each of the ghosts. It includes curried meat and vegetables, fried paddy, beaten
782 rice, fruits, and sweet puddings of various kinds. Toddy and arrack were traditionally served along with the meal. If a dead *kāranavan* is known to have enjoyed special foods during life, he receives a large portion of these foods. Occasionally, even in the past, individual Nāyars have been vegetarians. The spirits of vegetarian *kāranavans* may not be served with meat and are housed in a separate shrine. When the dishes are prepared, they are carried quickly to the shrine so that the ghosts may partake of their essence before others have tasted or smelled them. The living *kāranavan* places the leaves before the stools in the presence of men junior to him in the property group and then closes the door of the shrine. Age-rank is observed in making the offerings. For each spirit, in addition to its own leaf, is briefly offered the food later placed before the stools of spirits junior to it. Similarly, the vegetables of vegetarian ghosts are first offered to meat eaters who were senior to them, and the vegetables (but not the meat) cooked for meat eating ghosts are first offered to vegetarian ghosts who were their seniors. After a few minutes the *kāranavan* reopens the door and distributes the food, to be eaten by all members of the *taravād*. Women take no part in
[illegible] offering the food and may not enter the ancestral shrine on this day. They are also
[562] forbidden to enter it during menstrual and birth pollutions, and all members are forbidden entry during the fifteen days of pollution following a death.

000 Traditionally, at the close of offerings to the ghosts, men of the *taravād* might

Traditionally, at the close of offerings to the ghosts, men of the taravād might
become drunk with toddy and arrack. In this condition, one or more young men 796
might undergo possession by one of the ghosts. He performed a frenzied dance and 769
called out to the assembled members with the voice of the ghost, declaring its will 613
and thanking or threatening the *taravād* on its behalf. I heard of only one *taravād* 273
where this custom persisted. Shamanistic possession by the goddess Bhagavatī or by 787
the god Aiyappan is, however, still prevalent among rural Nāyars, and such religious [776]
possession is still more common among the lower castes. [784]

In some *taravāds*, propitiation of lineage ghosts accompanies that of various deities 769
associated with the *taravād*. Chief of these is the lineage's patron goddess (*dharma* 776
devī). The goddess, though known by different names in different *taravāds*, is always 782
thought of as a species of the generic goddess Bhagavadi or Bhādrakāli, the chief 613
deity of the Nāyars. Each group of Nāyar *taravāds* in a village usually possesses in
common a temple dedicated to Bhādrakāli, but each *taravād* has, in addition, its [346]
own goddess. Cults of the village goddess are more important in Cochin, and of the [784]
taravād goddess, in Kottayam. The village goddess is believed capable of withholding [753]
or inflicting on the population wholesale misfortunes of a kind which strike all men alike—smallpox, cholera, flood, drought, cyclone, cattle epidemic, or defeat in an intervillage feud. Such inflictions result from failure to propitiate the goddess or failure to uphold the moral laws of caste. The *taravād* goddess concerns herself with its members' private morality and inflicts such individual misfortunes as fever, barrenness in women or cattle, or grave financial loss.

In aristocratic *taravāds*, the goddess and the lineage ghosts may nowadays be [346]
housed together in an ancient gynasium (*kalari*) near the ancestral house—a building formerly devoted to the military training of the *taravād's* youth. The ghosts may then be propitiated with cooked food on the same day on which a cock is sacrificed to the patron goddess. In such rites, propitiation of both spirits and goddess are associated with the *taravād's* former martial glory. In the rites there usually figure one or more ancestral swords which the male forebears used during their lives. These swords are the property of the goddess and are propitiated by the *kāranvan* as representatives of the deity.

Lineage ghosts have some concern with the *taravād's* internal morality. If its 769
members fail in hospitality to guests, squander their income, or neglect their property, 626
the ghosts may inflict misfortunes on one or more members of the group. However, 782
failure to propitiate the ghosts correctly is the offence most likely to provoke retribution. Conversely, if offerings are made correctly to the ghosts, they will help to 613
preserve the *taravād* from misfortune.

The ghosts vary in their severity and in the wrongs which they punish. A *kāranavan* who amassed much property is most likely to resent extravagance on the part of his successors. Forebears who died prematurely are more punitive than those who died peacefully in old age. All ghosts, however, are somewhat capricious: a small offense may provoke stern retribution, and misdemeanors on the part of one adult may result in the sickness of another or of a child of the property group. In particular, a forebear who was injured or insulted by his juniors during life or after his death may wreak vengeance on the *taravād* even down to the seventh or eighth generation. One instance from a village headman's lineage in Kottayam will illustrate such retribution. In 1798, the property group was dying out for lack of women, and the *kāranavan* [597
adopted a woman and her children from a related segment of his lineage. After the [429]

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● 613 *kāranavan*'s death, his adopted successor was too young to manage the property. This
782 passed temporarily into the management of a man from still another branch of the
597 same lineage. When the true claimant came of age he disputed his guardian's management.
429 After a bitter lawsuit the guardian was deposed in a British court. He continued
[578 to live on the *taravād*'s land and to harass his young successor. When the guardian
died, the young *kāranavan* in his anger failed to arrange for the cremation rites until
753] several days had passed and the corpse had decomposed. The ghost of this proxy
kāranavan has harrassed his successors ever since, causing many of them to die of
diabetes. The present members regard this condition as a decomposition of the body
during life. The ghost's anger is so great that propitiations do not wholly avert its
vengeance, although special offerings temporarily delay the progress of the disease.

769 The misfortunes inflicted by lineage ghosts include many forms of sickness, mental
disorder, female barrenness and miscarriages, all of which are attributed to actual
613 bodily possession by a ghost. Financial loss, crop failure and the deaths of babies or
776 cows may also result from the ghosts' displeasure. I could find no very clear distinction
753 between the misfortunes inflicted by lineage ghosts and those brought about by the
761 patron goddess, by malevolent alien ghosts, or by the witchcraft or sorcery of enemies.
789 Indeed it is obvious that the Nāyars themselves do not clearly restrict particular
misfortunes to particular agents. For on the occasion of a misfortune, the *kāranavan*
must often consult the village astrologer (Kanisan) who makes calculations to discover
the responsible agent. He then instructs the *kāranavan* how to carry out its propitiation
776 or to accomplish its control.

769 However, my information suggests that some misfortunes may be more likely to
be attributed to some agents than to others. Miscarriages, for example, seem to be
[843 often attributed to ancestresses, to female alien ghosts, or to the patron goddess.
842] Barrenness is often attributed to the snake gods of the *taravād*, who are believed to
guard the fertility of its women. These misfortunes seem to be less often attributed
to male ghosts, although some instances are known. Perhaps most important, however,
circumstances immediately preceding the misfortune may help to determine the
agent. If a forebear has died recently, or if a *taravād* has failed to propitiate its lineage
ghosts or patron goddess, the *kāranavan* may not even trouble to consult the astrologer,
or the astrologer may merely corroborate his suspicions. Similarly, if a man has an
[754] enemy with whom he has recently quarreled and then himself falls ill with fever, he
is like to assume that the enemy has engaged the services of a witch or sorcerer against
him. In small villages whose population is stable, moreover, the astrologer makes it
his business to know the affairs of his clients and thus to diagnose appropriate causes
for their misfortunes.

692 *Sociological analysis.* A satisfactory analysis of the functions of lineage ghosts
must take into account those of other supernatural agents and of secular authorities.
[776 Among the Nāyars, supernatural agents have played only a minor role in punishing
784] offences against men, as distinct from those against themselves. This is undoubtedly
because human authorities of various kinds had strong judicial functions, deriving
from their incorporation in a kingdom. In the last analysis their authority was backed
by the military power of the king or chief. Among Nāyars, civil disputes were tried
by village headman or district chief. Certain major crimes against the kingdom's
[688] religious laws were tried in the Raja's court. They included the killing of a cow or a
Brahman or fornication with lower caste persons. The killing or assault of a Nāyar

The Killing or assault of a Nayar

outside the lineage led to feuds between lineages or between larger territorial units. 692
In Cochin, the king had more power than in Kottayam to curtail such feuds or confine [628]
them to organized duels for which a fee must be paid. Minor offences against caste
law, such as dining with low caste persons, were tried by the subcaste assembly of the [688] [564]
village and resulted in temporary excommunication of the offender's property group
and the payment of a fine to the village goddess's temple.

The *ḳāranavan* had the legal right to punish offences within the property group 613
and also those offences against caste law for which the caste held the property group 692
responsible until justice had been done. Incest and murder within the lineage appear [684]
to have been punished by expulsion from the *taravād* by the *ḳāranavan* and from the [682]
caste by the caste assembly. In cases of grave insubordination by a junior member, the [564]
ḳāranavan had the right to deny him maintenance or access to the ancestral house
until he mended his behavior.

Thus the supernatural agents of the village and the *taravād* primarily acted to 692
force the human authorities to carry out their judicial duties. If, for example, the 626
caste failed to excommunicate the *taravād* of an individual who had sinned against
its religious laws, it was believed that the village goddess would strike the village with 613
epidemic, flood, or some such misfortune. Similarly, if incest within the lineage went
undetected or unpunished, the lineage ghosts and the patron goddess might cause the
offenders to die or might bring misfortune on the *taravād* as a whole.

The fact that any member of the *taravād* may suffer as a result of the misdemeanors 613
of any other, carries into the realm of supernatural sanctions the collective responsibility of the *taravād* in social and legal affairs. If a man breaks a ritual rule of the 626
caste, his whole *taravād* is polluted and liable for excommunication. If a death or 783
birth occurs, the whole lineage is temporarily polluted and excluded from normal
social life. At the back of these norms lies the fact that the *taravād* is an economic
and legal corporation. Its property is owned jointly, and the *taravād* is responsible [421]
for the debts of any one member. Its male members must support each other in [476]
feuds against other lineages. It is not surprising that the concept of being members
one of another in secular affairs is projected into the realm of mystical retributions. [628]

The points at which supernatural agents might replace, or act instead of, human
authorities, appear to have been those where a subordinate was wronged by one who was 769
himself a powerful authority and could manipulate the law. Thus lineage ghosts were
probably particularly effective in punishing or setting to rights misdemeanors of the 626
ḳāranavan himself. I am uncertain whether, in traditional law, junior members could 613
sue in court for the deposition of an erring *ḳāranavan*. They certainly possessed this [694]
right in British law, but even so, it was very difficult before 1933 to get rid of a *ḳāranavan*. The lineage ghosts appear to have provided important sanctions against a *ḳāranavan's* misdoings, for they brought misfortune on a *taravād* whose *ḳāranavan* disgraced
its reputation for hospitality or squandered its property. I was told that the former [787]
custom by which a junior member might be possessed by a ghost and voice its threats
to the *taravād* added force to the complaints of young men who were cheated by
their *ḳāranavans*. The fact that only the *ḳāranavan* may propitiate the lineage ghosts [782]
points up both his responsibility to the ghosts to ensure good conduct and prosperity
in his *taravād*, and also his responsibility to his juniors to ensure the favor of the ghosts.

I have myself recorded no case in which lineage ghosts were believed to have actually
prevented a crime on the part of a *ḳāranavan*, as distinct from punishing one. V. K.

769 V. K. Raman Menon, however, records a legend of a mother's brother who deliberately
626 betrayed a nephew, whom he hated, to the vengeance of a lineage currently feuding
613 with his own.[6] The nephew was to have been killed by his enemies on the following
[173] day. But in the night his mother prayed for the return of her son's elder brother who was absent in a distant land. The lineage ghosts miraculously brought home the brother in time to save his junior's life. It must be remembered, moreover, that the belief that the deceased himself would become a lineage ghost capable of wreaking vengeance probably formed a sanction against intralineage murder.

562 Women are excluded from the ancestral shrine during their pollutions and may
[782] not enter it on the day of propitiations. The former prohibition is related to the whole
[841] concept of bad sacredness associated with emissions of the body, which prevents
[829] women from touching or eating with others or entering any sacred place during their pollutions. That women should be totally excluded from the shrine on days of propitiation seems also to relate to the general position of women in the society. As in most of the higher Hindu castes, women traditionally played a very minor role in economic production, for the work of production was done by the lower castes. A few women were scholars, and a few were even trained in arms, but the Nāyars' occupation as soldiers in general tended to exclude women from work outside the home. The bearing of children was by far the chief value of women. Correspondingly, women were subordinates in the legal sphere. They were throughout life under the legal guardianship of men, might not take part in public deliberations, and might not act as witnesses in the village court. The legal subordination of women may have been partly connected with their comparative lack of value in economic production, and perhaps partly, with the great moral authority they derived from childbearing—for female procreation was very highly valued and male envy of these functions was overt. The cult of lineage
[769] ghosts supports the correct operation of male legal authority within the *taravād*. The exclusion of women from participation in it, and their exclusion from the shrine on days when their procreative functions were most apparent, perhaps expresses in a formal manner the notion that the power which women derived from these functions was polar and even antipathetic to the legal and economic power of men.

769 Although the lineage ghosts had only subsidiary judicial functions, their cult
613 served in several ways indirectly to maintain right relationships within the *taravād*.
626 First, a *kāranavan* who respected and correctly propitiated his own forebears provided
182 a role model of piety for his juniors in their relations with living elders. Second, the ghosts, as we have seen, provided some sanctions against a *kāranavan's* ill treatment
769 of his wards. Levy,[7] in connection with the Chinese ancestor cult, has pointed out
171 the importance of having supernatural agents to whom a human authority owes
182 deference, in social units where the authority is not chosen by his subordinates and cannot easily be manipulated or removed by them. For the authority's good behavior toward his subordinates then becomes a part of his sanctioned duty toward his own supernatural authorities. In the Chinese cult, which in this respect resembles the Brahman, the head of a family must care for his patrilineal descendants because it is part of his duty to the ancestors to provide happy and prosperous offspring. For
769 these, by their own later ancestral offerings, will save the forebears' spirits, and his
613 own, from suffering in the life after death. In the Nāyar case, the *kāranavan* must
626 keep his *taravād* in good order because if he does not do so the lineage ghosts may inflict
182 suffering on all, including himself.

Third, the ghost cult obviously provides one explanation for the cause of mis- 769
fortunes, and offers a course of action whereby these may supposedly be allayed. 613
Further, the *taravāḍ's* collective responsibility for its misfortunes in a sense makes 182
the ghosts a common threat to its members, for all may suffer from their anger. The ghost cult thus enhances the sense of unity and common destiny of *taravāḍ* members.

Psychological analysis. The problem of the circumstances under which cults of 769
punitive ancestors arise does not seem to have been solved in culture and personality 171
writing. Freud[8] derived all forms of fear of, and taboos relating to, the dead, from ambivalence felt to these kinsfolk during life. Mead[9] in 1930 granted a probable universality of ambivalence to the dead, but pointed out that whereas Western Europeans tend to emphasize affection and grief toward the dead and to suppress hostility, some societies give ceremonial emphasis to the hostility and suppress the expression of affection and grief. Others appear to permit an equal expression of both hostility and grief, and Mead thought that personal conflicts relating to the dead may be almost eliminated when both attitudes find ceremonial expression. She argued that the choice of which attitude should be uppermost in ceremonial expression was "a function of the civilization in which the individual lives," but did not at that time attempt to relate attitudes to the dead to specific types of relationships with the living.

Opler,[10] in an analysis of Chiracahua and Mescalero Apache usages relating to the dead, has shown that these exhibit mixed feelings of grief and hostility, and has derived these from ambivalence to living relatives engendered in the matrilocal extended family. But Opler's analysis, convincing though it is, leaves us again with the problem that probably all social relations, and especially all kinship relations, are to some extent ambivalent. Why then do some societies express ambivalence in mixed attitudes to the dead, others in predominantly hostile attitudes with the benevolent aspects suppressed, and still others in predominantly benevolent attitudes with the hostile aspects suppressed? A more intricate analysis of types of ambivalence is required. Attempts in this direction have been made by a number of recent writers, notably Kardiner, Fortes, Roheim, Hsu, Mead in later writings, and Whiting and Child[11] in a cross cultural survey of beliefs about evil spirits and demons. Building on the theories of these writers, I shall try to find meaningful connections between Nāyar attitudes to lineage ghosts and their attitudes to living matrilineal kinsfolk of the preceding generation. 181

Nāyar lineage ghosts are oriented toward the living. Although Nāyars state that 769
good spirits go to a heaven of sensual pleasures and bad spirits to a hell of physical [772]
torture, they do not elaborate this belief or refer to it in connection with the cult of lineage ghosts. They believe that their forebears were sorry to die and are envious of the living. The forebears retain affection for their lands and houses and continue to be interested in tangible good things, particularly in food and drink. These attitudes appear to form part of a general this-worldly attitude among traditional Nāyars. As a caste, their chief interests have been in land and houses, political power, and military
exploits. They are not ritual specialists. Most Nāyar men and many women were [212]
traditionally literate in Malayālam. Malayālam poems, dramas, and translations [538]
based on the great epics, the *purāṇas* and the *Bhāgavad Gītā*, brought the content of much Sanskrit literature to them in a comprehensible form. Nevertheless, compara-
tively few Nāyars were philosophers or scholars. Among the great majority, ascetic [785]
practices were oriented chiefly toward averting misfortunes in this life rather than to [782]
accumulating religious merit against the life to come.

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181 accumulating religious merit against the life to come. With regard to their interests in this world, the ancestors resemble their descendants.

769 Lineage ghosts are powerful beings who can help or harm the living. The effect which they exert on the fortunes of the living is much greater than that exerted by the living on their own. They can aid their descendants by preserving crops, cattle, houses, and children, but their punitive characteristics are those most emphasized. [782] Offerings to ghosts are designed less toward seeking positive good than toward averting misfortune. There is no idealization of the ghosts as morally superior beings. They are human in their failings of envy and bad temper, and indeed, even more capricious [784] than the living. They may punish wrongdoing with a degree of justice, but they do not look sympathetically into the hearts of propitiants, and are almost as likely to exact vengeance for accidental mistakes in the performance of rites as for wilful [782] immorality. Nāyars do not attempt to enter intimate spiritual communion with them [782] or to please them by inner suffering and renunciation. Rather, the ghosts are bought off with gifts of food in order that their envy may be appeased.

604 These attitudes to the ancestors[12] are, it seems, directly related to relationships 613 with the senior generation among the living. A man's relationship with his mother's brother is, from childhood, one of stern discipline. All mother's brothers have authority 578 over their nephews and in traditional households may inflict corporal punishment on 561 adolescents. There is a marked lack of intimacy between senior and junior men within the *taravād*, and the sanction on a nephew's good conduct is fear of punishment rather than fear over loss of love. Good *kāranavans* are devoted to their juniors in a stern and dutiful manner. They are proud of their *taravād* as against the rest of the world, but they do not exhibit personal tenderness to their juniors. Power is vested in the senior generation; there is little feeling that a nephew could wield power over his uncle by withdrawing his emotional support. Great emphasis is placed on a formal etiquette of dignified and respectful behavior, amounting to partial avoidance, but neither party need feel that he loves the other in his heart. Nephews will not normally readily reveal hostility toward their uncles before outsiders, for they wish to preserve the dignity of the *taravād*. But they do publicly acknowledge hostility under provocation, and more frequently accuse the uncle of aggression toward themselves. That hostility is a normal component of relationships with mother's brothers is proverbial among Nāyars. They recognize this as the reason why a formal etiquette of behavior is indispensable. And even in spite of the stringent rules regulating the intercourse [626] of mother's brother and sister's son, physical aggression between them may occur. In spite of the supernatural sanctions against violence within the lineage, I heard several stories of nephews who poisoned or stabbed their mothers' brothers. Aged *kāranavans* of large *taravāds* often complain of their loneliness. They may not behave intimately with their juniors and know in their hearts that they are hated and envied. "Indeed," as one Nāyar remarked, "in an old-fashioned *taravād* the position of the *kāranavan* is not safe." The office of *kāranavan* is, of course, much coveted. Junior men commonly number themselves off in order of age-rank as second, third, fourth men, etc., and with divided feelings await the demise of those above them which [593] will raise them to higher rank. The relationship between older and younger brothers, own or classificatory, is only slightly less stern and formal than that between mother's brother and sister's son.

604
562 The relationship of a woman with her mother's brother is less harsh than that

between males, for a woman does not offer the threat of a rival to her male superior. 604
Difference of sex, however, makes this relationship even more formal than that 562
between men. Women do not appear frequently in the presence of their mothers' brothers. They occupy separate wings of the house, and intercourse between the sexes is severely restricted. Toward older brothers a woman's relationship is restricted 593
almost to the point of avoidance. If she commits a misdemeanor, especially a sexual 562
one, a woman immediately fears men senior to her in the *taravād*. Formerly, she 684
might be executed by her brothers if she had sexual relations with a lower caste man. In an orthodox household today, a girl who becomes pregnant by a low caste man will be either expelled from the house by her male seniors or, at best, will be thrashed and will receive much subsequent harsh treatment.

It may be wondered why, since women are excluded from legal authority and from 562
participation in the cult, ancestresses are believed capable of harming *taravād* members. 613
The explanation of this, too, seems to lie in the content of relationships with the 593
mother and other natal kinswomen. Women have no legal authority over their juniors. 769
Indeed, the mother of a *kāranavan* is herself under his jurisdiction. Women do, however, exercise great moral authority over their children throughout their lives. In 184
Cochin with duolocal residence, the care of children under about the age of five is almost entirely in the hands of women in a traditional *taravād*. Their fathers have no 562
rights over them, the *kāranavan* is too remote a figure to concern himself with details 613
of child training, and junior men of the *taravād* are often absent from home. A mother 593
commonly treats her small children with indulgence, but is necessarily also the source 591
of many frustrations, while the maternal grandmother and women of her generation are strict disciplinarians.

In Kottayam, where residence was traditionally avunculocal, children were frequently brought up in the *taravād* of the father. In such households today, the child has an intimate, affectionate relationship with his father who undertakes a part of his personal care. When the father's *kāranavan* is also the mother's father (as fairly often occurs with cross-cousin marriage), he and his wife treat the child with indulgence. Otherwise, they tend to have only a slight relationship with him and may even resent his claim to temporary hospitality in their house. The mother is, in these [604]
circumstances, again the child's chief mentor and disciplinarian, and he learns very early that his mother's brothers, though living elsewhere, are the real authorities whom he must respect and to whom he will return at adolescence, as their heir. In 613
both areas the reverence acquired for the mother is perpetuated throughout life. 593
Her wishes and those of his elder sister take precedence over those of a man's wife, to whom he has a very subsidiary attachment. The relationship with the mother is 184
clearly characterized by great depth of emotion and by greater tenderness than that toward male seniors. Even so, it appears that in this relationship too, the emotion is usually consciously ambivalent. I illustrate this statement briefly with reference to the 159
relationship between only one man and his mother, but it is characteristic of many. 593
This Cochin Nāyar, aged thirty-five, visited us stealthily in the evenings and kept his visits from his mother, telling her he had business in the town. He was afraid she would become jealous, and angry with him for eating Christian food. She watched over him, upbraiding him when he spent much time in the house of his wife and children. He took care to be prompt for meals, and although he found her food inadequate he would not complain in case he appeared to slight her cookery. He had had a high

159 school education and disbelieved in much traditional Nāyar ritual. Yet he once
593 arranged for the performance of a sacrifice to a minor malevolent deity, Kuttichāttan,
because his mother thought that this demon had killed their calf. On this occasion
he complained that he found her control irksome, and wished he had younger brothers
who would care for her and allow him to travel more. "I love *and* fear her," he said,
"Sometimes I am angry with her." "But you don't say anything?" "Ah, no, nothing!"
593 Far more than in most of the patrilineal castes of South India, therefore, a man's
769 mother remains the supreme, if somewhat resented, moral authority. There is no
wonder that after death a woman should be believed capable of punishing her children
and grandchildren if they displease her.

769 Even so, ancestresses play only a minor part in the cult of forebears, subordinate,
● 613 as in life, to the spirits of *kāranavans*. For the cult of lineage ghosts too closely resembles
everyday adult relationships in the *taravād* for women to be accorded a
776 paramount place within it. In religion, the supreme moral authority of the mother
593 finds its expression rather in the cult of the goddess Bhagavadi. Bhagavadi is lifted above
the sphere of kinship relationships, yet as patron of the *taravād* and the village she is
stated to be the supernatural counterpart of the mother. Her attributes are more awesome
and archaic than are those of ancestresses, and it seems probable that in her are
portrayed very early infantile fantasies of the mother, corresponding to those of the
period when she was the only significant object in the child's world. She inspires
devotion and tenderness but, in her aspect as Bhādrakāli, she is also a horrendous
demon, having snakes for hair, talons for fingernails, fangs for teeth, brandishing
weapons in her arms, and with her mouth dripping blood. Her oral aggression is
emphasized, for she is a devourer of male demons who dare to oppose her power.
Bhagavadi is the great deity of both men and women among Nāyars, but she is more
concerned with men than with women. She is the goddess of war, she possesses men
more frequently than women, and it is men who devote themselves intensively to
769 her cult. Ancestresses, on the other hand, seem to be somewhat more likely to attack
593 women than men. The different relationships of men and of women to their mothers
may be relevant in this connection. For a woman, the relationship with the mother
is less awesome, less inspiring, more intimate and realistic but also more irksome and
[613] rivalrous than for a man. A woman replaces her mother in the *taravād*, and as she
grows up, rivalry, including sexual rivalry, is often apparent between them. Women
retain the right to administer corporal punishment to their daughters until adolescence
or marriage, whereas men earlier pass under the discipline of their mothers'
brothers and appear to retain a more childlike image of the mother. Nuances in the
cult of the ancestors and the great deities appear to reflect this differential relationship
of men and women to the senior generation.

184 In Kottayam, with avunculocal residence, fathers traditionally had a protective
593 and intimate relationship with their children. It might be expected that the father's
ghost would figure in some way in the cult of ghosts. This is not the case. The cults
769 are practically identical in Kottayam and Cochin, and although a woman and her
613 immature children in Kottayam lived in the house of the woman's husband, the
husband's lineage ghosts were not believed capable of affecting their welfare. This is
apparently because, both in Kottayam and Cochin, the ancestor cult mirrors the
legal structure and collective responsibility of the *taravād*, which are identical in
the two areas. The father's ghost has no place among the lineage ghosts because,

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however intimately related to his children he may have been, he belongs to a different 593
economic and legal corporation. In death as in life, he has no publicly supported 769
authority over his children. Children do have a personalized relationship with their 613 ●
father's spirit in Kottayam, however, which is discussed below.

The emotional content of the relationships with lineage ghosts among the Nāyars K
does not depend upon the fact that they follow matrilineal descent, although of 769
course the role-structure of the cult is determined by this fact. The Īravas[13] of this 613
area, who are tenant cultivators of lower rank than the Nāyars, have small patrilineal 171
lineages and patrilocal extended families, cross-cut, traditionally, by dispersed exog- 174
amous matrilineal clans. The Īrava patrilineage is called a *taravād* and is headed by 184
its senior male member as *kāranavan*. The Īravas have a cult of dead patrilineal *kārana-*
vans almost identical in emotional and belief content with that of Nāyars. So also do
the Coorgs, a patrilineal caste of the small province east of Kottayam, well described
by Srinivas.[14] The common form of the cult and the similarity of detail in this general
area must undoubtedly be attributed to diffusion or to a common historical origin.
Nevertheless, the question then arises of why this cult was not diffused to all castes of
the southwest coast, notably to the Brahmans. Conversely, we may ask why the
Brahmanical cult of ancestors, which is quite different in form and content, did not
entirely replace the ancestral cults of the non-Brahman castes centuries ago—for
these castes have been exposed to Brahmanical culture probably for two thousand K
years and have in fact adopted many elements of that culture. Moreover, cults of 769
punitive ancestors similar to the Nāyar cult are very widespread in the world. It 171
seems certain that whatever their historical origin, the reasons for the perpetuation
of these cults must be sought in the role-structure of the kinship system and the 602
emotional content of relationships with major figures of the senior generation within 174
it. I would suggest that cults of predominantly punitive ancestors are likely to be 561
accompanied by kinship relationships in which the senior generation retains control 578
over the junior until late in life, but in which major figures of the senior generation
are not highly idealized. It seems probable that the chief sanction against value-
violating behavior will be fear of some tangible form of punishment, rather than
fear over loss of love, and that although open expression of aggression toward dis-
ciplinary figures is controlled, the aggressive component in the ambivalent relationship K
to seniors will be strong and not deeply repressed. Among Nāyars and Īravas of my 769
acquaintance, at all events, a man may even be conscious of his ambivalence toward 602
seniors, and to the extent that he is not able fully to accept his own aggressive feelings 154
he seems to project these in the belief that his superiors are even more punitive than 578
they may really be. A portion of this projected aggression his culture encourages him
to displace on the figures of lineage ghosts, who can inflict even more serious punish- 561
ments than can living superiors. As is frequently the case in our own society, the K
mechanism of projection seems to be closely allied with that of introjection, which [753]
appears in the belief that sickness and mental derangement are caused by the entry
of a hostile ghost into the body of the patient. T

The nature of traditional Nāyar relationships to their lineage ghosts may be clarified 769
by contrasting them with those of Brahmans. I choose for this purpose the Tamil 613
Brahmans of Tanjore,[15] with whom I am best acquainted. This caste of landowners
and ritual specialists has patrilocal extended families and patrilineal lineages. Headship 564
of the extended family does not, as among Īravas and Coorgs, pass down the line of 596

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his forebears. Thereafter he offers rice balls and other oblations in a *śrāddham* ceremony on each anniversary of the death.

Many of these customs are of long standing among the Nāyars. Barbosa[18] reported in 1518 that Nāyar royalty observed *dīkṣā* for the dead in the same manner as Nambūdiris. Sheikh Zein-ud-Deen[19] recorded the custom for commoner Nāyars in 1579. Linschoten[20] reported in 1598 that Nāyars normally cremated their dead. Today, Nāyar death and anniversary rites are almost identical in form with those of Nambūdiris. During the period of death pollution they employ a lower matrilineal caste to instruct them in the rites. (In Cochin, Chīdigans fulfill this function; in South Malabar, Attikūrssis; and in North Malabar, Mārārs.) The same caste assists Nambūdiri Brahmans to prepare the ritual materials for their funerals, and has clearly transmitted the Brahmanical rites to the Nāyars. Similarly, at the end of the death pollution on the sixteenth day, during the *dīkṣā* period, and on anniversary days, Nāyars are instructed in their oblations by a priest of a degraded subcaste of Brahmans. (This subcaste is the Elayads in Cochin and South Malabar and the Nambidis in North Malabar.) A few peculiarly non-Brahmanical rites do, however, survive. In Kottayam, poorer Nāyars among commoners customarily bury their dead.[21] In both areas those who burn the dead bury the bones and ashes in a pot under a jack-fruit tree outside the ancestral house near the ancestor shrine. Some leave the bones there permanently and consider that the ghost remains near the bones and the ancestral house. Others dig up the bones after the period of mourning, dispose of half of them in a sacred river, and return the other half to the grave. The bones of *kāranavans* are sometimes placed on an open platform under a jack-fruit tree, to which food offerings are made on days of propitiation. Other rites spring from the Nāyar view that the ghost requires appeasement rather than mere assistance to another world. Brahmans, for example, pour holy water into the mouth of a dying man to purify him for entry into the world of ancestors. Old-fashioned Nāyars offer rice gruel as a last act of appeasement. [613] ●

76 184 564 613 Even the Sanskritic rites are in fact so adapted to Nāyar requirements that they carry a quite different emphasis of meaning from that associated with them by Brahmans. First, the role-structure of the rites is, of course, completely adapted to the descent system. A Nambūdiri deceased's chief mourner is his or her eldest son, or, if there is no Nambūdiri son, the eldest brother's son. A Nāyar woman's chief mourner is her eldest son; that of a man, the man next junior to him in the property group. But all males of the *taravād* junior to the deceased make subsidiary *bali* offerings to him in the period of pollution. Brahman spouses observe mourning and death pollution for each other. Nāyar spouses traditionally observe no mourning or pollution for each other, for they belong to different *taravāds* and have no mutual legal obligations. If a Nāyar dies in a wife's house, his body must traditionally be returned to his *taravād* for cremation. Shortly before or after the death of her husband, a woman goes to view his body for the last time. She is then ceremonially conducted out of the house on the north side—the side opposite to that from which the god of death arrives. She is returned to her natal home, and after this she may never reenter her dead husband's house. In Cochin, where men traditionally had no obligations to their children, a child did not observe death pollution for his genitor. But in North Malabar, where children have an intimate relationship with the father in avunculocal residence during childhood, a man's sons make offerings for him during death pollution, and the eldest son is second-in-command to the chief mourner at the cremation. The [591]

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184 eldest son also traditionally observed *dīkṣā* for his father along with the matrilineal heir.
564 Age-rank within the *taravād* finds expression in the rites. Among Nambūdiri
613 Brahmans, if an unmarried but initiated boy dies, his father may perform his funeral
[775] and anniversary rites. For the souls of father and son are dependent upon one another
for salvation. But among Nāyars, a man may not take part in funeral rites for one
junior to him in the *taravād*, for respect toward juniors is inappropriate. A Nāyar
who dies leaving no junior old enough to act as chief mourner is therefore buried
without ceremony and no rites are performed for his ghost.

769 Nāyars have adopted the Brahmanical belief that funeral and anniversary rites
assist the spirit in its passage to another world, and that immersion of the ashes in
184 sacred water affords it peace. Like the Brahmans, they acknowledge the theory of
564 rebirth, and hold that a spirit which is correctly propitiated after death is likely to
[782] be eventually reborn in a high estate. As in the case of the Brahmans, the theory of
karma provides the Nāyars with a moral rationale for their high position in the caste
system, and it is chiefly in this connection that I have heard it quoted. It is difficult to
discover how old are Sanskritic beliefs concerning the soul among Nāyars, and they
are not uniform at the present day. Most Nāyars use the word *pretam* to refer to the
ghost or the soul in all contexts. This is a Sanskrit word (*preta*) for a malevolent
ghost, but it is used by Nambūdiri Brahmans only for alien malevolent ghosts. A
few Nāyars stated that that aspect of the soul which is reborn is the *ātmā*. This Sanskrit
word is used by Brahmans for the soul in connection with rebirth and with union
with the universal soul, called *paramātmā*. The *ātmā*, these Nāyar informants say,
is neither malevolent nor beneficent. It cannot be understood by ordinary people
and is a subject for philosophers. The *pretam*, by contrast, is the punitive ghost of
an ancestor or of one who died violently. It can be only too easily understood even
by the ignorant and does not require deep study. This belief in two souls, or in a soul
and a ghost, may be modern, for it was given by only a few younger informants.

769 At all events, the Sanskritic rites of death are customarily adapted by Nāyars to
184 belief in a malevolent *pretam*, for at every step fear of the *pretam* is referred to. Whereas
564 Brahmans perform the rites ostensibly in order that the soul may be at peace, Nāyars
have traditionally performed them in active fear of the ghost's retaliation should its
782 comfort not be ensured. During the days of pollution, Nāyars offer rice balls before
a palmyra stem set up in the yard before the ancestral house. The *pretam* of the deceased
is believed to enter this stem, and it is believed that it will attack the *taravād* with
further death or with sickness if the offerings are not satisfactorily performed. During
the offerings each Nāyar propitiant in turn wears round his waist a piece of cloth
torn from the wrapper of the corpse in order to associate himself with the spirit.
But inside this cloth Nāyars also tuck a knife, blade uppermost, to ward off the spirit's
[825] attack. After the offerings are made, both Brahmans and Nāyars clap their wet hands
to summon crows to eat the rice balls. If the crows do not come, it is believed that the
spirit has not received the offering. This may then be repeated on the advice of the
astrologer. In Tanjore, Brahmans seemed to regret the miscarriage of the offering
[787] only for the sake of the spirit. But Nāyars regard it as an extremely evil omen, and
fear the ghost's retaliation in the form of a second death within the *taravād*. The
Brahmanical ceremonies themselves contain rites of segregation from the deceased
[764] which are susceptible to the interpretation that those who perform them wish to be
rid of him. Such, for example, is the rite of dashing a pot of water at the head end of

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the pyre toward the close of the cremation, and the disposal of the bones and ashes 184
in a river far from the ancestral house. But among my Brahman informants in Tanjore 564
these rites were carried out without explanation, and hostility to the dead seemed to 782
find no conscious expression. Nāyars performed the same rites in full consciousness 764
of fear and hostility to the ghost. Even at the end of the *dīkṣā* period when the chief
mourner has deposited the ashes in a river, Nāyars believe that Bhairava and Kāla, [776]
messengers of the god of death, dog the mourner's footsteps back to his ancestral
house. He is out of danger from them only after performing final offerings in the house
which gather the ghost to its forebears and thus appease its wrath. Nāyars, like Brah- [152]
mans, express grief at a death and engage in ceremonial weeping, although neither
caste weeps with the loud vehemence characteristic of the lower polluting castes. But
whereas Brahmans give full expression to grief and guilt, suppressing the hostile
aspect of their ambivalence, Nāyars perform the same rites in consciousness both of
grief and of hostile fear of the dead.

The traditional Nāyar rites and beliefs illustrate the common phenomenon of 76
elements of symbolic culture being diffused from one group to another and endowed 184
with a new emotional content and meaning in accordance with the needs of the
receiving group. The Nāyars presumably adopted Brahmanical death rites centuries 564
ago because of the prestige associated with certain distinctive customs of the highest
group in the caste society. The extensive contact with Brahmans afforded to them by
hypergamous marital unions gave them an unusual exposure to Sanskrit culture.
But through centuries of exposure to Brahmanical custom the Nāyars retained such [782]
characteristically "low caste" features as animal sacrifice to punitive deities, religious
possession, and propitiation of punitive lineage ghosts. I would argue that the Nāyars
and lower castes retained these customs because the emotional dispositions engendered
by their occupations and social relations—in particular, their ways of handling aggression
and relationships to authorities—are different from those of Brahmans. Presumably
also the Nāyars adapted the Sanskritic death rites to their own role structure
and belief system, because these grew out of and served to uphold norms of relationships
within the *taravād*.

THE CULTS OF ALIEN GHOSTS

In addition to lineage ghosts, Nāyars believe that the spirits of persons of any 769
caste who died prematurely from epidemic, accident, murder, or suicide can bring 184
misfortune to the living. Such ghosts, which I call alien ghosts, haunt the neighborhood
where they died and are particularly malevolent. The misfortunes they inflict include
many kinds of sickness; madness, female barrenness, cattle deaths, house fires, or
poltergeist activities. Like lineage ghosts, most alien ghosts are called *pretams*. In
Cochin, the Sanskrit word *pilāca* is sometimes used to distinguish them from lineage
ghosts. In Kottayam, there is an elaborate cult of certain particularly important
ghosts, which are called *teyyams* (a corruption of the Sanskrit word *deva* 'god').

In Cochin, one or more alien ghosts is sometimes attached to a Nāyar *taravād*, 769
whose members are obliged to arrange for its regular propitiation. The ghost may be 613 ●
that of a person who is known to have died violently, within living memory, on the
taravād's land. Alternatively, when a misfortune occurs in a household, the astrologer 782
may newly discover that the ghost of some such person, long dead, is haunting the [778]
taravād's land. He may order a shrine to be built and propitiations to be made. Shrines

613 to alien ghosts are built in the garden of the *taravād* house. They are propitiated annually
or in emergency, usually with a cock sacrifice and an offering of toddy. Such alien
778 ghosts are of a lineage other than that of the hosts and are usually of different caste.
782 If a member of the *taravād* dies violently, his successors take care of his ghost in the course of their ancestral propitiations and do not commonly build a special shrine for it in their garden. They may fear such a ghost more than they fear the ghosts of forebears who died naturally, but they will not speak of this to outsiders. Rather, they are likely to deny to others that violent deaths have taken place in their lineage in the past, particularly if the deceased was a suicide or was executed in punishment for a crime. Such a ghost may however be regarded as a source of misfortunes by a Nāyar household of another lineage or by a household of one of the lower castes, expecially it the deceased died on its land or was in some way connected with it. It is then enshrined as an alien ghost in the garden of this house.

769 Most commonly, an alien ghost housed in a Nāyar garden is that of a former serf
615 of the property group, of one of the "exterior" agricultural laboring castes of Pulayans,
Parayans or Pānans. The legends of such ghosts are nowadays often forgotten, but
566 several Nāyars told me that they are likely to be the ghosts of serfs who died after a
564 quarrel with their masters or who were actually killed by them. The ghost is hostile
782 to the *taravād* as a group and demands regular sacrifices if misfortune is to be averted. It is more hostile and capricious than are lineage ghosts, although it can also afford a certain vague protection to the *taravād* if it is correctly propitiated. Propitiations are made annually by a person of the ghost's own caste, often a Parayan or Pulayan of a family now serving the Nāyar property group. The propitiant's fee and the materials for the offering are provided by the *taravād*.

An alien ghost tends to be angered by persons who walk near its shrine at times other than those of propitiations. Some ghosts are angered only if people approach them round midnight or midday. At night, however, ghosts are able to wander some distance away from their shrines, so that it is possible to approach and offend them
[787] without being conscious of trespassing. In case of sickness or misfortune, the astrologer may diagnose that someone of the *taravād* has unwittingly offended the ghost and may order an emergency offering. After he has made the sacrifice, the low caste
[578] propitiant is likely to become possessed by the ghost and, while in a state of frenzy, to declare its satisfaction or to order further offerings. He may also take the opportunity to voice any grievances harbored by the *taravād's* low caste servants against its *kāranavan*.

A ghost of this kind *may occasionally harm someone from outside its hosts' taravād* who walks on their land at night. It could also harm its low caste propitiant if he failed in the correct performance of the rites. Usually, however, its attacks are confined to its hosts.

The ghost of such a hostile servant is to be distinguished from that of a servant who died heroically and voluntarily in the service of his Nāyar masters. Many Nāyar *taravāds* have legends of faithful serfs who died defending their masters' house during war, saved the lives of women and children, rescued their patrons from accidental death, or committed suicide in grief when a Nāyar patron had been killed. After death the ghosts of these servants are housed along with the *taravād's* lineage ghosts and are honored in ancestral propitiations. Nāyars point out that their heroism even makes the difference of caste irrelevant, for food is offered to them before it is offered

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to lineage ghosts who were junior to them in age. The living of the *taravād* themselves 613
make offerings to them and do them obeisance, whereas the ghosts of hostile serfs are 566
especially polluting and malevolent and can be propitiated only by persons of their 564
own caste.

Even so, the ghost of such a lower caste person who is honored for heroism by 769
the *taravād* of his masters may, if he died violently, be feared as an alien ghost by 613
other *taravāds*. In Kottayam in the eighteenth century, for example, there lived a
certain Nāyar village headman who had as his servant a man of the Tiyyar caste of 566
cultivators. During the invasions of Malabar by the Mysorean Muslim general, Tippu 564
Sultan, in the 1780's, the Nāyar's *taravād* was threatened with conquest and forcible 175
conversion to Islam. Having sent the women and children of his house into hiding,
the *kāranavan* prayed before his lineage's patron goddess until the Muslims were at 782
his gates. He then persuaded his Tiyyar servant to kill him, being unwilling to face the disgrace of circumcision at the hands of the Muslims. Having slain his master, the servant hid himself in an outhouse of the *taravād*. In the night he went forth and attacked the Muslims single-handed, killing several of them to avenge his master, before he was himself put to death. The ghost of this servant is now propitiated along with the lineage ghosts of his master's *taravād*. It is also, however, propitiated as an alien ghost by several other *taravāds* in the neighborhood.

Occasionally, malevolent alien ghosts are those of Nāyars who died violently, 769
often in expiation of some crime. They may have committed suicide after being 613
outcaste for contravention of religious laws, or in the case of a woman, may have been
killed by their matrilineal kinsmen after cohabiting with low caste men. A woman 684
called Kadangōtt Makkam, also of Kottayam, became a ghost in this way. According [762]
to legend, she was suspected by her sister-in-law of having sexual relations with an
Oilmonger. Her brothers banished her from the *taravād*. She was agonized at the
thought of leaving her children, and drowned them in the *taravād's* well. Her *kāranavan* [682]
and brothers were then obliged to stab her to death—the customary penalty for
fornication outside the caste, and perhaps, also, for murder within the *taravād*. She [842]
became an alien ghost particularly liable to prevent women from bearing children, and is established in the gardens of several local *taravāds*.

Such alien ghosts, although Nāyar, are also propitiated by an officiant of the lower 769
caste. The propitiant is usually from some caste which specializes in exorcism and 564
counter-magic, such as Mannāns (washermen), Kanisans (astrologers, who in any 782
case diagnose the misfortune and advise the propitiation) or Pānans (umbrella-makers, exorcists and agricultural workers). The mode of propitiation is the same as in the case of a low caste ghost.

Finally, an alien ghost is occasionally that of a Brahman who died violently. Brahman ghosts, or Brahmarākṣas, unlike all other ghosts, must be propitiated with vegetarian offerings by a Brahman priest hired for the purpose. But Brahman priests, unlike low caste officiants, never enter a state of voluntary possession by ghosts.
Religious possession is particularly a low caste institution. It is not practiced by [787]
Brahmans, and when found among Nāyars, it is practiced by young men, women, and other persons who lack secular power. Brahmans do not need to become possessed by their ghosts and deities, for they have the power to demand whatever offerings and fees they require. Low caste propitiants need the authority of a supernatural agent in order to make demands on their high caste masters.

769 No clear distinction is made between alien ghosts and minor malevolent deities,
776 or demons, which are also sometimes called *pretams* in Cochin. Some demons are found
[782] throughout Malabar. Chief of these is Kuttichāttan, a spirit capable of all kinds of
[564] poltergeist activities. Sometimes, on the advice of an astrologer, a *taravād* privately
sets up a shrine to Kuttichāttan and arranges for his annual propitiation by a low caste
173 person in the same manner as an alien ghost. Often, indeed, local myths of particular
769 Kuttichāttans suggest that they have been derived from alien ghosts, whose legends
776 became fancifully embroidered with miraculous elements. The story of one Kutti-
782 chāttan, in this case enshrined in a Nambūdiri Brahman garden and propitiated by a washerman, will illustrate this process. The god was said to have been born from a sacrificial fire during ancestral ceremonies in a Brahman house. The Brahman house-owner brought him up, and when he was adult sent him to graze cattle as a serf. One day the Brahman's red-horned bull was missing, and the serf admitted that he had killed and eaten it. The Brahman tied him to the rafters of the cowshed and had him beaten to the point of death. Afterwards, the serf turned into a Kuttichāttan and disappeared, but hovered above the Nambūdiri household bringing misfortune until a shrine was set up for him. Educated Nāyar informants surmised that the spirit had originally been that of an executed serf, later glorified by his propitiants as Kutti-
782 chāttan. Similarly, Kadangōtt Makkam, whose story was related above, is spoken
769 of as a form of Bhagavadi in some *taravāds* where she is propitiated.

184 I have so far mentioned the kinds of alien ghosts which may be attached to individual *taravāds* in Cochin. In fact, however, cults of spirits and deities of the village are
776 grander and more numerous in Cochin than are those of the *taravād*. This parallels
564 the fact that the Cochin village was traditionally highly centralized as a unit of local
796 government. In this area, the temple of the village goddess Bhagavadi is managed
[794] either by a Nāyar village headman's lineage or collectively by a village community of commoner Nāyars. Only the Nāyars and castes above them might traditionally
[613] enter the temple, but all castes owed allegiance to the deity and took part in her annual festival. The lowest castes of former serfs, and some other polluting castes such as washermen, took part in the festival through the medium of one or more minor malevolent deities or particularly important local ghosts which occupied small
[753] shrines at a distance from the main temple. Such spirits were thought of as servants of the goddess, and at her will could "sow the seeds" of smallpox or other misfortunes in the village. To avert such misfortune not only must the Nāyars and other high castes propitiate the goddess herself, but the lower castes must also assemble, bringing *imitation bullocks and horses—the vehicles of the deity's demon servants*—and make
[787] offerings to these demons. Selected persons from these lower castes became possessed by the village ghosts or demons and, in masked dances, made oracular pronouncements both to their own and the higher castes. During the festival, and for several weeks before it, Nāyar households must also entertain these shamans privately in the courtyards of their houses and make gifts of grain to them which warded off the demons' wrath.

769 In Kottayam, the village was traditionally less centralized. Each Nāyar *taravād*
184 was an independent landowning body owing only tenuous allegiance to a chief. Cults
776 of deities and ghosts associated with particular *taravāds* are therefore more prominent
796 than are those of village temples, and it is in the former rather than the latter that
564 ritual cooperation between high and low castes is most prominent. Whereas a Cochin
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taravād may enshrine only one or two alien ghosts particularly associated with it, 184
leaving the majority of local ghosts to be propitiated at the central village temple. 776
a wealthy Nāyar *taravād* in Kottayam builds shrines in its garden for six or eight 796
alien ghosts and finances elaborate propitiations on their behalf. Such spirits are in 564
Kottayam called *teyyams*. As in Cochin, the spirits are often the ghosts of Nāyar or
low caste persons who died violent deaths—for example, girls who died violently 613
before marriage, women excommunicated or executed for sexual offences, persons 782
killed by lightning, servants executed by their masters, or warriors who died in battle.
Usually, miraculous elements are interwoven into their legends. Sometimes, they
become merged with common minor deities such as Vettakkorumagan, Kandhākaranan, or some species of Bhagavadi. In a few cases, they have become associated
with some episode from the puranic myths and their human origin is lost sight of.
As in the village temple rites of Cochin, these ghosts in Kottayam are propitiated,
on behalf of the Nāyar *taravād*, by selected persons from the lower castes. These are
chiefly Vannans (washermen) and Malayans (exorcists).[22] Annually, the propitiants
assemble in the Nāyar courtyard and recite the myths of origin of their spirits. Later,
they make and receive blood sacrifices to the spirits, and finally, while possessed by [787]
them, perform spectacular masked dances and declare the spirits' satisfaction to an
assembled company of many castes. These festivals take place throughout the whole
of several nights in the month of January to February and draw vast crowds from the
surrounding neighborhood.[23]

I have so far dealt with modes of propitiation of, and possession by, alien ghosts. 787
In addition, both in Cochin and Kottyam, Nāyars believe that certain persons can, 754
through appropriate rites and spells, gain private control over alien ghosts and minor
deities and engage in witchcraft or sorcery through their power. In what I call witchcraft,[24] the individual uses the power of his patron spirit in order to take the form of a 564
bull, dog, jackal, or other animal. In this form he touches his foe in the night, causing [753]
him to fall ill with fever, to become insane, or even to die. Witches always belong to
one of the lowest castes of Parayans, Pulayans, Pānans or (in Kottayam) Malayans. [761]
They usually attack persons of Nāyar or other high caste whom they themselves hate.
Occasionally, however, a normal person of any caste, even a Nāyar, may hire a witch
to attack a personal enemy.

A sorcerer performs rites and recites spells to an alien ghost or minor deity over which he has control and causes it to pass magically into the body of an enemy, thus bringing about fever, miscarriages in women, insanity or death. Sorcerers can also bring about the deaths of cattle. Nāyars attribute sorcery chiefly to lower caste persons. For whereas the Nāyars predominantly worship Bhagavadi and certain Sanskrit deities, the castes below Nāyars specialize in the propitiation of evil ghosts and minor deities, and it is solely with these lower supernatural beings that witchcraft and sorcery are associated. Washermen, astrologers and umbrellamakers, who specialize in exorcising ghosts from the bodies of patients, are particularly suspected by Nāyars of themselves engaging in sorcery. Nāyars do, however, occasionally suspect Nāyars of other lineages, particularly affines with whom they have quarreled, of practicing sorcery or of hiring low caste witches or sorcerers to attack them.

Witchcraft does not usually require the diagnosis of an astrologer. A Nāyar of nervous disposition simply suspects that a low caste man has bewitched him if he falls ill after encountering an animal in the night. Sorcery is usually diagnosed by an

in the Nāyar case, for in spite of the institution of lineage ghosts there are serious 769
limitations on the expression of aggression within the matrilineage. It is therefore 152
logical to hypothesize that a residuum of unexpressed aggression is displaced outside 182
the lineage toward outgroups and toward supernatural agents which represent these groups. However, there are also, as we shall see, realistic reasons, issuing from the political and economic structures, why individuals should feel aggressive toward outgroups of various categories. It seems probable that the institutions surrounding alien ghosts absorb some of these aggressions as well.

Alien ghosts in the general context of Nāyar handling of aggression. The role-structure of alien ghost cults is that of the wider community, and to understand them we must see how they are interwoven with political and economic relationships between lineages and between castes. For political and economic factors limit both the form and the direction which the expression of aggression can legitimately take in these various relationships.

Within the lineage, as I have suggested, the Nāyars' aggression training permits 769
them to acknowledge to themselves a certain degree of hostility in their relations 613
with matrilineal kin. It does not, however, permit physical aggression between matri-
lineal kin, nor does it permit the expression of projected aggression in the form of 578
accusations of witchcraft or sorcery between matrilineal kin. For the *taravād* is the 182
smallest corporate unit in Nāyar society. Its members are bound by the closest ties 152
of economic cooperation. They must present a united front to the world, and such forms of aggression would be incompatible with the smooth functioning of their group. A degree of aggression can, however, be safely projected outside the *taravād* on to lineage ghosts, whose cult, as we have seen, actually strengthens the solidary bonds between living matrilineal kin.

Turning to wider relationships within the Nāyar caste, we must note that the 152
political organization traditionally permitted the open expression of organized physical 578
aggression against peers outside the lineage, in controlled feuds between lineages 628
of the same village, villages of the same chiefdom, and chiefdoms of the same kingdom,
and in warfare between kingdoms. Such physical aggression within the caste was 613
possible because the internal organization of the caste was segmentary. Conflicts 182
within it therefore balanced each other. Lineages opposed each other within the village but combined against other villages. Villages opposed each other within the chiefdom but combined against other chiefdoms. Chiefdoms opposed each other within the kingdom but combined against other kingdoms in war.

In this system, the most severe limits on intersegment conflict were those on feuds 627
within a village. Such feuds arose in response to grave disputes—often, it appears, 613
involving charges against a Nāyar woman of immorality with a low caste man. But,
particularly in Cochin, these feuds were of short duration. They were controlled and 152
curtailed by the authority of village headman and district chief. Hence interlineage 182
disputes were limited in their mode of expression. Moreover, it was possible for individuals of different lineages to quarrel, yet to be unable to persuade their *kāranavans*
and the rest of their lineages to enter a feud with them. It is here that suspicions of 627
sorcery came into play, chiefly through beliefs in the use of hired sorcerers who con- 613
trolled alien ghosts. Affines were particularly suspect, for, outside the lineage, affines 152
were the persons with whom one had closest relationships and with whom disputes 754
could most easily arise. If, for example, a *kāranavan* seemed particularly fond of a 182

627 wife, his matrilineal juniors were believed to be especially likely to hire sorcerers to
● 613 harm her. For they would fear that their *ḳāranavan* might secretly convey to his wife
152 gifts and cash which belonged to his *taravād*. Yet without their *ḳāranavan's* support
they would be unable to enter an open group conflict with the *taravād* of his wife.
754 The belief that affines might practice sorcery, and the existence of ritual remedies
182 against such attacks, therefore provided for the expression of projected aggression
against persons of other lineages within the caste. I do not know whether Nāyars did, in fact, hire sorcerers to harm their affines, or merely suspected this of others, but it seems very probable that they did. If so, sorcery also provided a covert mode for the expression of direct aggression outside the lineage too. It must be noticed that although, in the case cited, these hostilities arose as much in the conflict of interests between the *ḳāranavan* and his matrilineal kin as between the *ḳāranavan's* wife and her husband's *taravād*, their institutionalized expression was not allowed to disrupt the *taravād*. For the *ḳāranavan's* matrilineal kin could not practice, and could not be suspected of practicing, sorcery against the *ḳāranavan* himself. Instead, members of the *ḳāranavan's* lineage were believed to move (and probably did move) against his wife's lineage as a group, thus endangering the solidarity of the marriage but indirectly promoting unity within each lineage.

Turning to the relations between castes, it is obvious that as endogamous groups
564 of different rank, occupation and wealth, castes were in many contexts outgroups to
578 each other whose interests were opposed. As landlords and noncultivating tenants,
152 the Brahmans and Nāyars wished to exploit the lower castes for their labor; conversely,
182 the lower castes wished to obtain as much compensation as possible from the higher
754 castes. In these circumstances there was great realistic potential for hostility between
castes, quite apart from the fact that the internal unity of each caste probably required the displacement of considerable additional aggression toward outgroups in other castes. Organized physical aggression between castes was, however, not feasible. For castes were economically and politically interdependent and linked by hereditary, interhousehold service ties. The lower castes could not rise up against the higher castes who employed them and held political power, and the higher castes could not wantonly harrass the lower castes on whom they depended for services. Instead, it was in the relations between castes that the institutions of witchcraft and sorcery were most prominent. The general tendency was for the Nāyars to accuse the lower castes of these evils. This is understandable, for the Nāyars with their wealth and authority had particular reason to suspect the lower castes of envy and hidden hatred. This generalized projection of aggression toward the lower castes served to enhance the internal unity of the Nāyar caste. At the same time, the open expression of aggression against particular low caste persons was institutionally controlled. For the astrologer did not customarily name his client's enemy, and even if the Nāyar had his own suspicions, open accusations of witchcraft and sorcery were not permitted.

769 The lower castes were considered peculiarly appropriate propitiants for alien
564 ghosts, and only low caste people could voluntarily undergo possession by them.
787 This suggests that the Nāyar fear of direct attack from an alien ghost, like the fear of
152 witchcraft and sorcery, expressed in a disguised manner the Nāyars' projected aggres-
182 sion against the lower castes. The association between lower castes and alien ghosts
[766] was, for Nāyars, indeed appropriate, for both were ritually polluting. Among Nāyars,
the corpses of persons who die violently or from epidemic are unusually polluting and

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their ghosts unusually dangerous. Instead of being burned by their matrilineal kin, 564
the corpses of these persons are buried hastily by men of the washermen's caste—a 787
caste particularly associated with demon propitiation and voluntary ghost possession. 152
The spirits of these victims become alien ghosts. In their anger they may possess and 182
cause injury to persons of any caste in their community. But only the lower castes
can induce shamanistic possession by them, and it is chiefly (some say only) the lower [766]
castes who can control them to work good or ill. Appropriately, Nāyars believe that
low caste witches perform additional rites connected with highly polluting objects
and places in order to enhance their evil power. Witches, for example, are believed to [754]
procure a magical substance by abstracting the foetus from the body of a pregnant
woman and boiling it in a cremation ground, to the accompaniment of spells to a
favorite ghost or patron demon.

There is, however, a qualitative difference between the Nāyar fear of direct 769
attack from an alien ghost and the fear of witchcraft or sorcery. An element of morality 613 ●
enters into the former fear, even though alien ghosts are more wanton and capricious
than lineage ghosts. Although they are malevolent and hateful, alien ghosts must, 182
like lineage ghosts, be respected and propitiated, and there is a feeling that they have 564
the right to be as they are. When they are associated with regular cults of the *taravād* and the village, moreover, alien ghosts can also afford some vague measure of protection from misfortune to those Nāyars who conscientiously arrange for their propitiation. It follows, therefore, that the alien ghost attached to a *taravād* or a village temple acts in some measure as a kind of conscience for the Nāyar in his relations with low caste people. For a Nāyar *taravād* which arranges grand festivals for its alien ghosts, lavishing gifts on the low caste officiants who propitiate them and represent them as oracles, is also likely to be a *taravād* which has good relations with its lower caste
servants in all contexts of living. In the case of the Nāyar relation to alien ghosts of [154]
his *taravād* and his village, as in the case of his relation to lineage ghosts, the concept of reprojection of the superego may therefore be appropriate, as well as that of the simple projection of aggressive id impulses. For while there seems no doubt that the Nāyar projects on to alien ghosts some of the aggression which he has toward the lower castes, just as he projects onto lineage ghosts some of the aggression he feels toward matrilineal elders, these ghosts act also as stern monitors of his conduct in relationships, respectively, with the lower castes and with matrilineal kin.

The situation is somewhat different with regard to beliefs in witchcraft and sorcery. 754
It is true that a Nāyar who has recently wronged an untouchable or an affine may be 769
one most likely to suspect untouchables or affines of attacks by sorcery. But he does
not—at least openly—phrase the attack in terms of justifiable retaliation for his own 564
wrongdoing. Instead, he speaks of some anonymous affine or low caste person who,
out of his own envy and wickedness, has used his evil power over a patron ghost in
order to harm an innocent person. Nor does the Nāyar respond to the attacks of witches [782]
and sorcerers by humble propitiation of the possessing demon. Instead he engages a [755]
low caste practitioner of his own to exorcise the demon with the help of a superior
ghostly power. Thus, while both the belief in sorcery and the public cults of alien ghosts probably reveal, indirectly, the projection of Nāyar aggression against outgroups, they operate in different social contexts. Witchcraft and sorcery are regarded, by Nāyars who are the recipients of these attacks, as the evil work of envious persons against those more successful than themselves. They are seen as covert substitutes for

754 forms of direct aggression which would be condemned by law. I am uncertain whether
769 low caste people actually practice sorcery, but it seems very probable that they do.
564 If they do, it is also very probable that they regard their actions as forms of retaliation
which are morally justifiable, although outside the framework of the law. By contrast,
alien ghosts institutionally attached to the *taravād* and the village have the support
of all right-minded persons and are more comparable to institutionalized secular
authorities. For they are concerned with the overall maintenance of interdependent
and harmonious relations between castes of the community, and their cults are a
public, collective acknowledgement of the need for these relationships.

564 A complete analysis of alien ghost cults would, of course, require full discussion
769 of their role in the lives of the lower castes themselves. I lack space here for such a
discussion but will make one or two relevant points. In each of these lower castes
there were cults of familial ghosts. These, though less elaborate than the Nāyar cult
of lineage ghosts, fulfilled similar intrafamilial functions. Some lower caste households
[778] also erected one or more unhewn stones in their gardens which were believed to
enshrine male or female alien ghosts or minor deities. These spirits seem to have fulfilled,
for the household itself, similar functions to those of the *dharma devī* of a Nāyar
taravād. They were propitiated by the low caste householder. Nāyars believed that a
low caste man could also control such a household spirit, or some personal spirit over
which he had gained individual sway, to bring harm on an enemy through sorcery.
Lower caste persons certainly believed that some members of their castes possessed
these powers, and it seems probable that some persons did try to employ them. Household
or personal spirits could also be used by powerful owners to exorcise other harmful
spirits from the bodies of high or low caste people suffering from attacks by sorcery.

564 The Nāyar's relationship to these lower castes was therefore one of secular authority
152 combined with some ability to oppress them in the economic and political spheres.
754 In addition, the Nāyar projected his aggression against them in the belief that they
might harm him through witchcraft or sorcery. The lower caste man's relationship
to the Nāyar was one of submission. He could not express direct aggression toward
the Nāyar. He probably did, however, express aggression toward a Nāyar enemy
covertly through sorcery. It is possible that a few low caste persons in addition believed
themselves capable, through witchcraft, of assuming the form of an animal and bringing
harm to an enemy of higher caste. It must also be mentioned that low caste persons
believed others of their caste to be capable of sorcery against themselves. Witchcraft,
769 however, seems to have been confined to relationships between low and high castes.

The lower castes of the village also owed allegiance to the Nāyar goddess Bhagavadi,
564 who was enshrined in Cochin in the village temple, and in Kottayam in small temples
782 attached to particular *taravāds*. The lower castes could, however, approach Bhagavad,
613 only through the propitiation of alien ghosts attached to the *taravād* or the temple.
In the context of these propitiations, the lower caste officiant's relationship to his
776 Nāyar hosts was a complex combination of aggression, authority, cooperation, and
152 submission. In the *teyyam* festival of a Nāyar *taravād* in Kottayam, for example, lower
caste officiants must first humbly gain permission from the living Nāyar *kāranavani*
the Nāyar lineage ghosts and the *taravād* goddess before starting their own propitiations.
In the offerings to the *teyyams* which follow, the officiant's attitude to these minor
deities is ostensibly one of humility, although the actual performance of the blood
sacrifices permits considerable expenditure of aggression. Later, when the officiant

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dons his mask and becomes possessed by his *teyyam*, he may adopt an authoritative 764
or aggressive attitude to his Nāyar hosts, demanding gifts or threatening them with 564
misfortune before conferring his blessing. He may not, of course, physically attack 782
the Nāyars. Indeed, he is, while possessed, likely to solicit admiration by inflicting 613
physical suffering on himself, usually by burning himself with torches or rolling in [787]
the red hot ashes of a fire. After the oracular pronouncements, having doffed his mask, [085]
the officiant again becomes the servant of the *taravād* and humbly accepts his fee. For the low caste officiant, therefore, these festivals permit a limited, stylized expression of aggression and a temporary assumption of authority toward their high caste masters. At the same time, the festivals underline both the need for interdependence between the castes, and ultimately, the lower castes' permanent, secular role as submissive servants.

Functions of the cults of alien ghosts. My discussion of alien ghost institutions in the 769
general context of Nāyar handling of aggression has necessarily pointed to some of 182
their social and psychic functions. These may, it seems, be summarized as follows. 152
First, the cults permitted, in a harmless manner, the handling of aggression which [754]
arose in relations between castes. Second, whether or not witchcraft or sorcery were [626]
actually practiced, the belief that those whom he wrongfully harassed could arm themselves with these ritual weapons must have acted as a deterrent to the Nāyar authority who was tempted to oppress low caste subordinates, or to favor his affines at the expense of his matrilineal juniors. Through witchcraft and sorcery, alien ghosts, therefore, might help to prevent injustices which could not readily be brought before a secular authority.

Third, these institutions brought together in ritual cooperation the very categories 769
of persons whose mutual ambivalence provided the ultimate motive force for the 564
institutions themselves. In the case of witchcraft and sorcery, there existed a compli- 182
cated interplay of hostilities and alliances which, over time, balanced each other. All Nāyars feared the harmful supernatural power of the lower castes, and this gave unity to their caste. In a particular instance, however, a Nāyar who believed himself attacked by an individual low caste practitioner, or by another Nāyar with the help of such a practitioner, could obtain relief only by engaging the ritual assistance of some other
officiant from one of the suspected castes. In the case of the cults of alien ghosts institu- [152]
tionally attached to his *taravād* and his village temple, it seems that the Nāyar's [154]
generalized fear of and hostility to outgroups was turned outside the area of human relations and focussed upon supernatural agents feared by all. But again, only willing and friendly ritual cooperation with lower caste officiants could ward off supernatural attacks from the whole community, including the Nāyars.

It seems probable to me that one of the most important functions of all religious 796
ritual, if not the important, is this resolution of conflict within individuals and within 769
groups. The manner in which this is achieved varies greatly. The rituals of rebellion[25]
and the initiation rites[26] analyzed by Gluckman, for example, on the surface bear little 152
resemblance to Nāyar cults of the dead. But as Gluckman has shown, their broad 182
social functions are the same. Institutionalized religious ritual, like the private rites of obsessional neurotics, permits to the individual a disguised expression of his aggression, while at the same time reassuring him that his control over the direct physical expression of aggression is unimpaired. But institutionalized ritual does far more than this. It has not only temporary therapeutic value for the individual, but is also interwoven

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769 with social, legal, and economic institutions in such a way that it resolves recurrent
conflicts within them and thus affords them support. For institutionalized ritual
152 draws into cooperation, in common acts and a common belief system, the very cate-
182 gories of persons upon whose mutual ambivalence the rites are founded. More than
this, by bringing home to the participants a sense of their common helplessness in face of the dangers and mysteries which confront man both in his own nature and in his world, ritual appears to transmute their very hatred into sentiments of mutual dependence and love.

Modern Changes in Cults of the Dead

178 At the present day the cult of lineage ghosts tends to be retained in its traditional
769 form only in the most traditional households—those having residential and economic
● 613 norms most closely approximating the traditional pattern, and living in the old style
of ancestral house. In the new houses built in the past twenty years there is no ancestral shrine, and varying degrees of modification and attrition are observable in ancestral and death rites in these modern types of household.

596 In households comprising an elementary family or a congerie of mixed matrilineal,
cognatic, and affinal kin, the cult of lineage ghosts has died out in its traditional form.
178 In some families emergency propitiations are still made to the ghosts of kinsfolk on
769 the advice of an astrologer. But such a ghost may now be that of any relative who died
782 in the house, and the propitiation may be carried out by any adult male resident.
In one Cochin house, for example, lived an old woman, her elder widowed daughter,
[613] and her children, and her younger daughter, daughter's husband and their children.
The old woman's son, who would traditionally have been *kāranavan*, had taken his share of property and gone to live with his wife. When the younger daughter's small girl fell ill with fever, the astrologer advised a propitiation of the ghost of the elder daughter's husband, who had died in this house and been buried near it three years previously. The food offering was made by the child's father in a corner of the living room. In this case neither ghost nor propitiant were members of the *taravād*. Fifty years ago neither one of them could have been concerned in this *taravād's* ancestral rites.

613 In some households, regular collective offerings to lineage ghosts are still made in
178 July and October, but the form of the rites has changed. Cooked rice balls are offered
as in *śrāddham* instead of the old offerings of cooked food. In Cochin in 1952 there
769 was no prohibition of alcohol. But even so, many modern families despised the old
782 offerings of toddy, meat, and arrack and substituted vegetarian food with coconut
juice, or else performed the Sanskritic rites. Even in traditional *taravāds* whose members have not yet divided their property, educated *kāranavans* are now often unwilling to perform the old-fashioned rites. Such was the case in one wealthy *taravād* of a Kottayam village headman. The *kāranavan*, a university graduate and a politician, felt that he must maintain the old ceremonies for the sake of his *taravād's* local reputation, but would not perform them himself. Instead he persuaded his younger son to carry out the offerings to the lineage ghosts and the annual cock sacrifice to Bhagavadi. This youth was, of course, of another *taravād*. Traditionally he would not even have been permitted to enter his father's ancestral shrine. In many households there are now no ancestral propitiations, for many now deny to lineage ghosts the power to bless or harm.

Funeral and *śrāddham* rites persist in a fuller form, but these, too, are often curtailed. 178
This is especially the case in *taravāds* which have lost their ancestral wealth. Rice 76
balls are sometimes offered only on the two last days of the pollution period. Only [602]
close kin, and not the whole Nāyar community, are invited to the sixteenth day
feast. Often no *dīkṣā* is observed at all. Alternatively, twelve sets of *dīkṣā* rites, for the
twelve months of the year of mourning, may be performed in succession on the sixteenth
day. Often the bones are not taken to a sacred river. If they are taken, it may
be believed that the ghost is thenceforth appeased and that no further *śrāddham* or
ancestral rites are required.

The role-structure of death rites has also changed. In most households only immediate 178
younger brothers and maternal nephews, or the own children of a deceased 764
woman, take part in the offerings, instead of the whole *taravād* as heretofore. On the [596]
other hand, women, as well as men, now offer rice balls to the ghosts of their parents
or matrilineal elders. This reflects a change in the legal status of women, and the fact [613]
that women are now the legal heads of many recently partitioned households. In [562]
elementary family households, spouses now frequently observe death pollution for
one another. At the same time, each may now even refuse to attend the funerals of [594]
matrilineal kin. Both in Cochin and Kottayam, the son of a man now often replaces
the matrilineal heir as chief mourner, especially if he has inherited his father's property.
Nāyars indeed say that "the rites go with the property." If there are disputes over [578]
the property, sons and nephews may dispute the right to perform the ceremonies, [428]
feeling that their performance gives the chief mourner the right of inheritance. Some
men perform rites for both father and mother's brother; others, for neither, if neither
bequeathed wealth. The beliefs which accompany funeral and *śrāddham* rites have
also suffered attrition. In general, the belief that death rites are performed solely to 178
give rest to the spirit is triumphing over the belief in the necessity to propitiate 76
punitive ghosts. On the other hand, the Nāyars do not dwell on the traditional Brahmanical
belief in the tortures of hell which await unpropitiated souls. Many state
that they now disbelieve in any form of afterlife. These perform rites only as a mark
of respect for and commemoration of the dead. A very few refuse to observe death
pollution or to perform funeral rites at all. One educated Nāyar, for example—a
medical doctor—stated that on the deaths of his parents he would merely cremate
their bodies and invite a few like-minded friends to a meal to commemorate them.

Analysis. Behind these changes lie several separable though related kinds of change in Nāyar social structure and culture. With regard to changes in the cults of dead kinsfolk, the collapse of the *taravād* as a legal and economic corporation is of major importance. With the loss of collective legal responsibility which this entails goes a loss of the sense of collective moral responsibility. Nāyars who are no longer legally responsible for one another, who no longer share land, a common house, and a common destiny, no longer think it probable that their misdemeanors can bring misfortune to each other.

The collapse of the *taravād* is also, of course, accompanied by a total change in the 178
relationships between matrilineal kin. Mother's brothers whose property is divided 613
from that of their nephews no longer have authority over them. Indeed, the mother's 604
brother is now often absent in his wife's house when a child is growing up and exerts
no discipline over him. In any case the change which takes place in matrilineal relationships
after a modern division of property is very marked. One man whose *taravād*

178 was still undivided commented to me on this change. "In my *taravād*," he said, "I
613 dare not speak before the *kāranavan* without standing and placing my hand before
604 my mouth. But in K. *taravād*, after their partition, I have seen the nephews sitting
to play cards with their uncle and passing the cigarette from their mouth to his.
When I saw this I knew that relationship means property, and without property
there is no relationship."

178 Moreover, the change to elementary family households does not merely entail
594 a shift of the same disciplinary functions from the mother's brother to the father.
152 Nāyar fathers have a tradition of indulgent tenderness toward their children and are
loth to discipline them. Even when they are forced to do so, the techniques of discipline
593 differ from those in a traditional *taravād* house. In the intimate atmosphere
of the small elementary family household, traditional etiquette is abandoned. Children
[154] learn to obey both parents from love more than from fear. There appears to be a
much deeper repression of aggression than in the traditional setting, and correspondingly,
[769] many young Nāyars cannot entertain the notion that their parents' ghosts
could act punitively toward them. It seems probable that such changes in the modes
of handling aggression—affected also by the collapse of the military tradition and
the modern legal ban on all forms of physical aggression—may also lie behind the
repugnance of modern Nāyars for such other traditional religious forms as blood
sacrifice and spirit possession.

178 Also important in the abandonment of ghost cults is, however, an increased tendency
564 toward the adoption of Sanskrit rites. This tendency, which has marked all
the non-Brahman castes during the past hundred years or so, I would associate with
177 increasing mobility within the caste system and, most recently, with its gradual
collapse. For the Nāyars, as for the lower castes, the Brahmans are no longer a group
with whom they have fixed status relationships. Instead, the Brahmans are now
a reference group whom the Nāyars emulate and with whom they compete in the
struggle for high rank and respectability. Some Nāyars who still hold their traditional
beliefs in ancestral spirits and deities deliberately "purge" their rites of non-Sanskritic
elements in order to gain respectability. Others have changed both rites and beliefs
toward a modified form of the Brahmanical religion, even while they are busy repudiating
the religious authority of the Brahman. Yet others, whose number is probably
[829] increasing, repudiate both Brahmanical and non-Sanskritic religions in their orthodox
forms. Instead, they work out for themselves a more or less agnostic world view with
humanitarian ideals, in which ceremonies, if they figure at all, figure only as acts of
piety toward respected persons.

178 The cults of alien ghosts are also changing their form and gradually dying out.
769 This change accompanies the gradual collapse of the caste system as a system of ranked
occupational groups linked by hereditary service ties. The collapse of the caste system
564 itself results from the growth of the capitalist market economy and the democratization
of political institutions. Some Nāyars retain their beliefs in witchcraft and
sorcery, but the categories of persons whom they suspect are no longer solely caste
[755] determined. They are as likely to include fellow factory workers or competitors in
government service, irrespective of caste. Professional exorcists of appropriate caste are
[782] often no longer available, for many have left their traditional work. So also have many of
the low caste families who formerly propitiated ghosts and minor deities associated
with village temples or with Nāyar *taravāds*. Since the passing of the Temple Entry

564 The Kurup, Nambiyâr, Viyyûr, Mânavallan, Vengôlan, Nelliôden, Adungâdi, Kitâvu, Adiôdi, Âmayengolam, all superior clans, belong, properly speaking, to North Malabar. The Kiriyattil, or Kiriyam, said to be derived from the Sanskrit graham, a house (a doubtful derivation) is the highest of all the clans in South Malabar, and is supposed to comprise or correspond with the group of clans just named of North Malabar. In the old days every Nâyar chief had his Chârnavar, or adherents. The Purattu Chârna are the *outside* adherents, or the fighters, and so on, and the Akattu Chârna are *inside* adherents—clerks and domestics. The clan from which the former were drawn is superior to the latter. The Urâli are said to have been masons; the Pallichans, mancheel* bearers.†

The Vattakkâd clan, whose proper métier is producing gingelly or cocoanut oil with the oil mill, is the lowest of all excepting, I think, the Pallichan. Indeed, in North Malabar, I have frequently been told by Nâyars of the superior clans that they do not admit the Vattakkâd to be Nâyars, and say they have adopted the honorific affix "Nâyar" to their names quite recently. [141] It seems rather odd that this clan, or at any rate one sub-clan of it is almost the tallest and has the finest nasal index, being the only clan whose nasal index is finer than that of the Nambûtiri.

564 Union by marriage, or whatever the function may be called, is permissible between most of the other clans, 582 the rule which was noticed already under "Nambûtiris"‡ by which a woman may never unite herself with her inferior, being always observed. That is, she may unite 564 herself with a man of her own clan or with a man of any superior clan, or with a Nambûtiri, an Embrântiri or any other Brâhman, or with one of the small sects coming between the Brâhmans and the Nâyars, but she cannot under any circumstances unite herself with a man of a [264] clan which is inferior to hers. Nor can she eat with others of a clan inferior to hers. A man may, and does [851] without restriction. [613] Her children, by an equal in race and not only in mere social standing, but never by one

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[493] * A mancheel is a conveyance carried on men's shoulders, more like a hammock *slung* on a pole, with a flat covering over it, than a palankeen. The palankeen is unknown in Malabar.

† There is in the Cochin state a clan, Elâyadan, which is practically equal in status to the Nambûtiri.

‡ Madras Government Museum Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1.

who is racially inferior, belong to *her* Taravâd. The 564
children of the inferior mothers are never brought into 851
the Taravâd of the superior fathers. That is, they are 613
never brought into it to *belong* to it. But they may live
there. And where they do so, they cannot enter the
Taravâd kitchen or touch the women while they are
eating. Nor are they allowed to touch their father's
corpse. They may live in the Taravâd, under these and
other disabilities, but they are never *of* it.

It will be as well to avoid here a possible error that 564
may have arisen from the statement that most of the 582
clans may intermingle. Those of the same clan name
may marry. The Nâyars of North Malabar are held to
be superior all along the line, clan for clan, to those
of South Malabar, which is divided from the north by the
river Korapuzha, 7 miles north of Calicut; so that a
woman of North Malabar would not unite herself to a
man of her own clan name of South Malabar. There
will be more to say on the point when we come to
"Marriage." A Nâyar woman of North Malabar cannot 564
pass northward beyond the frontier; she cannot pass the 784
hills to the eastward; and she cannot cross the Korapuzha
to the south. It is tabu. To the west is the sea. The 562
women of South Malabar are similarly confined by *custom*, 178
breach of which involves forfeiture of caste. To this 486
rule there is what appears to be an exception, and this
exception is now having some slight effect, since of late
years the world has come in touch with the Malayâli
who now-a-days goes to the University, studies medicine
and law in the Presidency town or even in far off
England. It is that women of the relatively inferior
Akattu Chârna clan are not under quite the same restrictions
as regards residence as are those of most of the
other clans; so in these days of free communications
when Malayâlis travel and frequently reside far from
their own country, they often prefer to select wives from
this Akatta Chârna clan. This may have some effect on
the status of the clan.

But the old order changeth everywhere, and now-a-days Malayâlis who are in the Government service and obliged to reside far away from Malabar, and a few who have taken up their abode in the Presidency town, have wrenched themselves free of the bonds of custom, and taken with them their wives who are of clans other than the Akatta Chârna. But this is more new fangled than orthodox. The interdiction to travel, and the possible exception to it in the case of the Akattu Chârna women,

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784 has been explained to me in this way. The Nâyar woman observes pollution for three days during menstru-
562 ation. While in her period she may not eat or drink
178 with any other member of the Taravâd, and at the end of it, that is on the fourth day, she must be purified.
783 Purification is known as "mâttu" (change), and it is effected by the washerwoman who, in some parts of South
841 Malabar, is of the *Mannan* or Vannan caste (whose *métier*
564 it is to wash for the Nâyars and Nambûtiris), but who is,
613 as a rule, the washerwoman of the Tîyan caste, giving her, after her bath, *one of her own* clean cloths to wear
486 (which is called mattu, change of raiment) instead of the soiled cloth which she takes away to wash. Pollution, which may come through a death in the family, through child birth, or menstruation *must* be removed by "mâttu." There is no avoiding it.* Until it is done, and it *must* be done on the fourth day, the woman is out of caste. It must be done in the right way at the right moment under pain of the most unpleasant social consequences. How that the influential rural local magnate wreaks vengeance on a Taravâd by preventing the right person giving "mâttu" to the women is well known in Malabar. He could not with all the sections of the Penal Code at his disposal inflict deeper injury. Now the Nâyar woman is said to feel compelled to remain in Malabar, or within her own part of it, in order to be within reach of "mâttu." My informant here tells me that the Vannan caste being peculiar to Malabar, the Nâyar women cannot go where these are not to be found; and that "mâttu" must be done by one of that caste. But this is not the rule. I know from my own observation in the most truly conservative localities, in Kurumbranâd for instance, where the Nâyar has a relative superiority, that the washerman is as a rule a Tîyan; and I cannot but think that the interdiction has other roots than those involved in "mâttu."
[123] It does not account for the superstition against crossing water which has its counterparts elsewhere in the world. As bearing on this point I may mention that the Nâyar women living to the east of Calicut cannot cross the river-backwater and come into the town.

564 The Zamorin is the over-lord of the Akattu Chârna
178 clan, and with the decline of his power and influence, it may be that the women of it have latterly taken more
562 liberty than was formerly possible.

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* More will be said on this point when we come to describe the Tiyans.

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[553]

Nâyar is affixed as an honorific after the name. Thus one whose name is Gôvindan is called Gôvindan Nâyar.

Taravâd name.	Name.	Occupation.	Age
Manjôli	Gôvindan	Domestic servant ...	30
Kêdôth	Karunâkaran ...	Milk seller	34
Chuliotkolodi ...	Ithapu	Cultivator	32
Puliakôth	Kêlu	Do.	27
Kurunthal	Narrâinan	Do.	35
Kazhaparambath ...	Shankaren	Do.	32
Etalakandiel	Kêlu	Servant	22
Thanikât	Cherukutti	Do.	25
Thattatath	Chekkunni	Peon	35
Nambidivittil	Kunhunni	Cultivator	50
Nadaviladatha	Chandukutti ...	Do.	25
Tuthenvittil	Vêlu	Writer	24
Thekakamukal	Rámuni	Cultivator	22
Kulangarathathil ...	Kannan	Do.	37
Kizhukalangot	Gôvindan	Do.	25
Pitôli	Rámuni	Do.	36
Puliakôth	Kôman	Do.	25
Edakapura	Rârappan	Peon	46

There seems to be a distinct or specific name for every garden, every acre of land in Malabar, whether in the forest or cultivated, whether enclosed or not. We shall hear of this again when we come to speak of the jungle people, some of whom change their name, their *house* or Taravâd name, as they change their residence from one place to another, always calling themselves after the land on which they are at the time living. Others again cling to the name which is that of the land whence the family has sprung, so to speak. 553 552

That the Taravâd name of the Nâyar is that of the land is tolerably evident. Contrary to the rule in Southern India there is, in Malabar, absolute proprietorship of land; and the land, the family house built on it, the land wherein lie the ashes of the ancestors, and the family itself are all included in the meaning of the word Taravâd. 613 552

ÚRÂLI NÂYARS: ENDOGAMOUS.

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Ages ranging between 20 and 45.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Averages of 25.	To stature = 100.	Remarks
Stature	180·8	152·2	163·1	...	
Height, sitting	89·9	79·1	84·2	51·6	
Do. kneeling ...	135·3	113·3	• 120·8	74·0	• 120·75
Span	193·0	161·7	171·3	105·0	

*301 564 silver earrings called kalluvechcha kadukkan which means an earring set with stone (pushyarâgam—topaz).

(1) Three plain golden rings on ring finger of left hand, the same on the little finger of the same hand, and a thin iron ring on the ring finger of the right hand.

[302] (2) Sandal paste patch over glabella; four stripes of the same on chest; three vertical stripes on each upper arm.

[789] (3) Three golden earrings—the usual kadukkans—in each ear. An amulet in a silver cylindrical case worn on the waist. Inside the case is a charm written on a copper leaf. It is to protect its wearer against the influences of the evil eye.

(4) One tambâk, one plain gold ring on ring finger of the right hand.

[304] (5) Ears pierced. Wears no earrings as he has no money. A dab of sandal paste over the glabella, another over the sternum, and on each shoulder.

163 *564 *Prolificness.*—The clan being endogamous, it will be well to note here the number of children born in 16 families of those examined. In all there were born 44 male and 35 female children; altogether 79. This gives an average of 4·9 in each family; and of those there were living at the time an average of 4·6 for each family. A figure which is above the average for the Nâyars as a body, be it noted.

141 It is perhaps scarcely worth noting that the average weight of four men was 119 lb.

Names of some of those examinad.

● 613	Taravâd.	Name.	Occupation.	Age.
*564	Mêlapalli	Kêlu Nâyar	Cooly	22
463	Kanjôli	Râman Nâyar ...	Writer	22
	Kurundottathil... ...	Krishnan Nâyar ...	Do.	20
551	Puthukûdi	Achutan Nâyar ...	Trade	22
	Ponmilli	Krishnan Nâyar ...	Do.	45
115	Kuttakil	Râman Nâyar ...	Cooly	32
	Payarvîtil	Aiyappen Nâyar ...	Mason	36
	Pûvakunial	Châthu Nâyar ...	Cultivator ...	26
	Kalathil	Shangaran Nâyar ...	Cooly	25
	Korolath	Shangunni Nâyar ...	Do.	22
	Pallithotathil	Gôpalan Nâyar ...	Nothing	22
	Kûtakkil	Râman Nâyar ...	Cooly	30
	Thondil	Appa Nâyar ...	Writer	20

551 Thondi or Thundi was, I think, mentioned by one of the ancient geographers as a port near where this last man lived. This man, therefore, bears the name of the place as it was, probably, in the days of Ptolemy.

142 +564 *Colour of the skin (Broca's colour types).*—The fairest was No. 40 (one only); and the two next fairest were 30 to 44 and 39 to 44. The darkest was 43. The average seems to be a little darker than 29 but not so dark as 28. Darker than the Kiriyattil.

Colour of the eyes (Broca).—The colour of the eyes of half the number was as No. 1, and that of the other half as No. 2. One exception was between Nos. 1 and 10. The average therefore is a dark brown; not black.

+301 564 [304] *Ornaments.*—Ears pierced, and the usual earrings (kadukkans) worn by those who can afford them. In one case the earrings were set with a red stone. The ornaments or adornments of various individuals were as follows:—

(1) Bell metal ring on the ring finger of right hand.

(2) Two brass rings on ring finger of right hand. A string of wool thrice round the right wrist to keep off fever at night.

(3) Tattooed circular mark over glabella. The operator was a woman of the Chetti caste, a travelling tattooer, and the cost of the operation 2 pies.

[515] [789] (4) One gold kadukkan in each ear. Two copper rings on ring finger of right hand. Washing the face with a hand wearing a copper ring removes black spots on the face, and prevents them coming. So said the wearer.

(5) Two amulets, silver cylindrical cases containing mantrams, worn on a string round the waist to keep off fever and devils. Amulet cases are often worn on the waist in the way of ornament pure and simple.

+163 +564 *Prolificness.*—In 12 families the children born were 29 males and 34 females, or an average of 5·2 children to each family.

141 The average weight of 4 individuals was 119½ lb.

The names of some of those examined.

	Taravâd.	Name.	Occupation.	Age.
551	Blathâdi	Govindan	Cultivator	40
+564	Râvâri Chandil	Kêlu	Do.	22
	Palôli	Kunju	Do.	25
463	Murikolipôil	Shangaran	Trader	21
115	Kuttadath	Krishnan	Writer	20
	Thaikandi	Appu	Cooly	26
	Thazhathadathil	Châthu	Do.	24
	Erankulangara	Kittan	Milk seller	25
	Vêlashêri	Cherukoman	Cultivator	40
	Chêlattumal	Kunhunni	Cooly	44
	Patavetti	Châthukutti	Cultivator	62

*301 564 Copper sheet on which the charm was inscribed in a silver cylindrical case. Copper ring on ring-finger, right hand.

(2) Two copper rings on the ring-finger, right hand. Belongs to the Ellenkiria, so wore no earrings.

(3) Brass ring, ring-finger, right hand. Also of the Ellenkiria.

(4) Copper ring, ring-finger, right hand. Gold earrings of the ordinary pattern.

(5) The ordinary gold earrings. Silver string round the waist; not exclusively ornamental. He fastened his loin cloth to it.

*163 564 *Vital Statistics* were noted in but two cases. In one family there were two brothers and three sisters; in another, one brother and two sisters.

115 Names, etc., of a few Taravâd.	Name.	Occupation.	Age.
*564 Puthen Vitil	Krishnan	Cultivator	52
Parithil	Achutan	Do.	27
● 613 Malabitil	Sivarâman	Do.	22
Cholale	Râman	Do.	20
551 Muthira	Narrâyanan	Teacher	26
Kanakath	Kunhi Krishnan * ...	Unemployed ...	22
463 Mannareth	Shangaran	Trader	30
Kûmbiyal	Kannan	Peon	25
Othianmâdattil ...	Gôvindan	Do.	33

NAMBIYÂR NÂYARS.

*553 564 Men of this clan affix Nambiyâr to their name. Thus, Gôvindan Nambiyâr, Kêlu Nambiyâr.

141 *564

Ages ranging between 20 and 40.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Averages of 22.	To stature = 100.
Stature	177·1	155·7	165·1	...
Height, sitting	89·3	80·0	84·2	51·0
Do. kneeling	129·8	115·0	122·0	73·9
Span	188·0	166·5	175·3	106·2
Chest	84·0	75·0	80·3	48·6
Shoulders	42·8	37·8	40·0	424·2
Left cubit	50·5	43·6	46·0	27·9

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* This individual had 'Menon' instead of Nâyar after his name, he having been invested with the distinction by the Zamorin.

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Names, etc., of some of those who were examined are given below:—

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Taravâd.	Name.	Occupation.	Age.
Pathushêri ...	... Kanâran ...	... Rent Collector (for a temple).	22
Mâvila ...	... Kumâran ...	... Cultivator	21
Châlayil Kandôth ...	Châttu ...	... .	22
Puthiotil ...	... Râman ...	... Servant	22
Chalil Kannôth ...	Anandan ...	... Cultivator	25
Ramath ...	... Kunhi Râman	... Landlord	34
Kalliat-panôli	... Râmuni ...	... Stamp vendor ...	30
Thêrugandi ...	... Paidal ...	... Cultivator	25

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PURATTU CHÂRNA NÂYARS.

Men of this clan bear the affix Nâyar after their name, as Gôvindan Nâyar, Gôpâla Nâyar.

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Ages ranging between 20 and 70.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Averages of 25.	To stature = 100.
Stature	174·8	155·0	166·1	...
Height, sitting	92·4	77·7	85·3	51·3
Do. kneeling	130·2	113·7	122·7	73·9
Span	184·1	155·6	174·0	104·7
Chest	87·6	69·7	79·6	47·9
Shoulders	43·9	33·3	39·6	23·9
Left cubit	49·1	42·0	45·8	27·6
Left hand length	19·3	16·8	18·5	11·1
Do. width	8·3	6·5	7·9	...
Do. middle finger	11·6	9·8	10·5	6·3
Hips	28·0	23·8	25·7	15·5
Left foot length	27·4	22·3	25·3	15·2
Do. width	9·9	7·4	8·7	...
Cephalic length	20·6	17·6	19·5	11·7
Do. width	15·5	12·9	14·5	...
Do. index	81·5	65·2	72·2	...
Bigoniac	11·1	9·3	10·3	...
Bizygomatic	13·9	11·7	13·0	...
Maxillo-zygomatic index	88·8	73·9	79·5	...
Nasal height	5·2	4·0	4·8	2·88
Do. width	3·9	2·9	3·6	2·17
Do. index	90·0	56·9	76·8	...
Vertex to tragus	14·4	12·2	13·1	7·9
Do. to chin	21·1	17·5	19·8	11·9
Middle finger to patella	17·5	5·3	10·7	6·44

Cephalic length.—In 8 individuals or 32 per cent. of the whole, the cephalic length was 20·0 or over. The maximum cephalic width (of one individual only) is abnormal; the next nearest to it is 14·8. In 6 individuals the nasal

one occasion he was frightened when near water, and 301
subsequently was troubled by beings called Pûtams, 564*
devils of a very inferior kind which haunt water. He had [776]
bad dreams, so consulted a Mâppila priest (a Musalian [789]
—a priest of sorts) who gave him the mantrams. Wore
also a charm—" to entice the public " as he explained, so that people will, as a rule, like him, please him, flatter rather than annoy him. He got this too from a Mâppila priest—a Mullah.

(3) Aged 24. This man had travelled. At Dvâraka the city of Krishna, the ninth incarnation of Vishnu [304]
(in the Kulluva peninsula), a chank above and a chakkra below had been branded on his left upper arm, on his right, a chank above and a lotus below. Each forearm bore the branded mark of an indistinct seal said to represent Krishna, testifying to a visit to the temple at Dharnidara. Had been to Benares and worshipped his ancestors at Gaya (throwing their ashes into the Ganges), an operation which at once removes all necessity to give them any further attention.

Prolificness.—In 9 families, in respect of which notes 163
were taken, there were born altogether 48 children, 30 563
male and 18 female, or about 53 children to each family.

Following the rule, or rather custom, which governs 564*
all marital connexions amongst the Nâyars, a woman of this clan may be mated with a man of the same clan, or with a man of the Kiriyattil clan, but with no other clan. Consequently, a man of this clan cannot be mated with a Kiriyattil woman, for the woman can never mate with one who is not at least her equal.

Names of some of those examined.

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Taravâd.	Name.	Occupation.	Age.
Kizhâk Vellat	Kundu	Cultivator	42
Panôli	Konti	Do.	22
Karuthôdiyil	Gôvindan Kutti	Head of his family	21
Vellât	Gôpâlan	Cultivator	24
Pudieth	Kanaran	Schoolmaster	23
Puttikapureth	Kelukkutti Menon*	Writer	36
Karumuthil	Kandar, *alias* Kunja Panikkar.*	Cultivator	70
Pâlat	Râma Panikkar	Do.	56
Kâkkât	Gôvindan	Do.	20

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* The affix (Panikkar, Menon) is a title, not necessarily but possibly hereditary. [553]

Note.—I find I have noted one man as Viyyâr Purattu Chârna, as if Viyyûr is a sub-clan, and that he marries in his own sub-clan; but I am not sure whether the Purattu Chârnas are so sub-divided, and think not.

x 142 564 The hair on the person of a youth aged 20 (No. 1 above) was noted thus—

(*a*) On the head very plentiful, black, glossy and wavy; treated with gingelly oil. Sprouting on the lip and chin. A small patch of moderate thickness on the sternum; slight on the arms; moderate on the legs.

Another, aged 25—

(*b*) On the head very thick, and approaching the outer edge of the eyebrows. Thick on the chest and mid line of abdomen, although these parts have been shaved recently, as also the arm pits. Thick hair in the small of the back. Slight growth on the back. Moderate on the arms; thick on the legs.

[304] [613] The individual (*a*) said he shaved any day of the week, and any day of the month. He was the Kârnavan of his Taravâd: a very youthful one.

Colour of the skin.—The fairest was between 33 and 40 (Broca); the darkest was 43 (redder). The average seems to be between 29, 37 and 44.

Colour of the eyes is a light brown. The actual numbers are—

Of colour	type	No.	1	(Broca)	5	individuals.
„	„	„	1 to 2	„	6	„
„	„	„	2	„	7	„
„	„	„	2 to 3	„	5	„

(Two were not included.) So that, although the eyes of rather more than one-fifth were dark brown, what would ordinarily be called black, the remainder were distinctly lighter in colour; and the number of persons whose eyes might be called quite a light brown, equalled those whose eyes were nearly black.

141 564 *Weight* of but 3 was recorded. The average is 105½ lb.

163 564 *Prolificness.*—In the 8 recorded instances the average number of children in each family was 3·7. It will be remembered that this clan is perhaps most of all under process of intermixture, its women mating with men of several higher clans (their own included) and with Nambûtiris.

301 564 [304] *Ornaments.*—Ears are always pierced, and the usual Malabar earrings—kadukkans—are worn; sometimes as many as four in each ear. Individuals were noted thus—

(1) Aged 24. Circular patch of sandalwood paste, 1·8 cms. in diameter over the glabella. Two stripes of sandalwood paste on each upper arm. No ornaments,

(2) Aged 32. Four gold earrings in each ear. One "tambâk" ring on ring finger of left hand. A ring made of a bit of wire picked up on the road worn on the ring finger of left hand. 301 564*

(3) Two gold earrings, set with a red stone, in each ear. Wears an amulet, contained in the ordinary cylindrical amulet case; but I have not noticed what the amulet itself actually is. He used to be much troubled by a devil, the departed spirit of an east-country Brâhman who died by drowning. He wore the charm to keep this gentleman off. [775] [789]

(4) Aged 24. A silver girdle worn, instead of a string, to which the languti is tied. An iron ring on the 3rd toe of the left foot. Rings are very rarely worn on the toes by any people in Malabar. All over the rest of the Madras Presidency they are, of course, common.

(5) Aged 39. Three earrings, of the usual pattern in each ear. A ring called an elephant's ring, made of silver, in which is arranged circularly a piece of the hair of an elephant's tail, worn on the ring finger of the left hand. There is one of these rings in my collection.

Names, etc., of a few are given—

Taravâd.	Name.	Occupation.	Age.
Pilathottathil ...	Thêyyan Mênon ...	Amshom Mênon or writer. ...	44
Potishêri	Unikkandan ...	Post runner	31
Valia parambath ...	Râman	Peon	20
Chatho Vîtil	Vêlappa Mênon ...	Servant	26
Chandrethil ...	Kuttan	Do.	22
Earat	Krishnan	Cartman	39
Kanjôli	Shangara Mênon ...	Writer in a temple ...	34
Kôlangyarath ...	Chandu	Cooly	36

115 551 613 463 564*

This last-named individual was measured in the Cannanore Jail, in which institution he, a prisoner himself, filled the office of hangman. He had hanged 10 men in the jail, and, at the rate of 2 rupees a case, he was owed 20 rupees; a nice little sum, which he would be given when leaving the jail at the expiration of his sentence. I was surprised to find a man of the Nâyar caste filling the office of hangman, so enquired the reason and was informed he had put aside the caste scruples while in jail. The office was in its way lucrative, and, when he emerged into freedom, no one would be the wiser, and he would have twenty and odd rupees in his pocket. He did not mind violating certain principles of his caste, doing that which is derogatory, so long as no one knew; but he *did* mind being found out. 564* 693 183

unsuitability to the time in which they exist, which is 585
apparent amongst those societies more liable to change. 764

But whatever the reasons may be, the relations
between the sexes in Malabar are unusually happy. 182
They seem to be more than commonly natural. The
most obvious reason for their being so is that they are 593
less influenced by considerations of property than else- [421]
where. The desire to maintain property within the
family is the curse of all natural relations between the sexes. What strange customs has it not put upon mankind! We have some strange examples of these in Southern India, as when a woman is married to the door-post of the house, and the house owner begets children on her to inherit his property; or when a man marries his child to a woman, and himself begets children on her, and the individual who stands in the position of father may be but a few years older than the son. But we need not look farther than Europe for anomalous customs which inhibit the working of the law of natural selection. Malabar is fairly free from unfortunate customs, and it is perfectly fair to say the marital relation amongst the Nâyars is more than commonly natural.

A description of the ceremonies and formalities 588
connected with the marital connexion will now be
attempted. The first of these, described as "most [121]
peculiar, distinctive, and unique," is the Tâli-kettu-kalyânam. The details of this ceremony vary in different parts of Malabar, but the ceremony itself, in some form, is essential, and must be performed for every Nâyar girl before she attains puberty. Tâli-kettu-kalyânam means marriage by tying the tâli, or ceremony of tying the tâli, a small golden ornament, worn on the neck, the ordinary badge of marriage amongst the Dravidian peoples.

The following account was given by M.R.Ry. 564
K. R. Krishna Menon, retired Sub-Judge, to the Com- 613
mission:—

"The Tâli-kettu-kalyânam is somewhat analogous to what a 588
Dévadâsi (dancing girl attached to pagodas) of other countries
undergoes before she begins her profession. Among royal
families, and those of certain Edaprabhûs, a Kshatriya,—and
among the Chárna sect, a Nedungádi,—is invited to the girl's
house at an auspicious hour appointed for the purpose, and in
the presence of friends and castemen ties tâli round her neck,
and goes away after receiving a certain fee for his trouble.
Among the other sects, the horoscope of the girl is examined [787]

564 613 along with those of the boys of her Enangan (a recognised member of one's own clan) families, and the boy whose horoscope is 588 found to agree with hers, is marked out as a fit person to tie the [787] tâli, and a day is fixed for the tâli-tying ceremony by the astrologer, and information given to the Káranavan of the boy's family. On the appointed day the boy is invited to a house near that of the girl, where he is fed with his friends by the [574] head of the girl's family. The feast is called 'Ayani Unu,' and the boy is thenceforth called 'Manaválan' or 'Pillai' bridegroom. From the house in which the Manaválan is entertained, a procession is formed, preceded by men with sword and shield shouting a kind of war-cry. In the meantime a procession starts from the girl's house, with similar men and cries, and headed by a member of her taravâd, to meet the other procession, and after meeting the Manaválan, he escorts him to the girl's house. After entering the pandal erected for that purpose, he is conducted to a seat of honour and there his feet are washed by the brother of the girl, who receives a pair of cloths on the occasion. The Manaválan is then taken to the centre of the pandal where bamboo-mats, carpets, and white cloths are spread, and seated there. The brother of the girl then carries her from inside of the house, and after going round the pandal three times, places her at the left side of the Manaválan, and the father of the girl then presents a new cloth tied in a kambli to the pair, and with this new cloth (technically called 'mantravadi') they change their dress. The wife of the Káranavan of the girl's taravâd, if she be of the same caste, then decorates the girl by putting anklets, etc. The Purohita called 'Elayatu' (a low class of Brâhmans) then gives the tali to the Manavâlan, and the family astrologer shouts 'Muhurtham' (auspicious hour), and the Manavâlan, putting his sword on the lap, ties tali round the girl's neck, who is then required to hold an arrow and a looking-glass in her hand. In rich families a Brâhmini sings certain songs intended to bless the couple. In ordinary families who cannot procure her presence, a certain Nayâr who is versed in songs performs the office. The boy and the girl are then carried by Enangans to a decorated apartment in the inner part of the house, where they are required to remain under a sort of pollution for three days. On the fourth day they bathe in some neighbouring tank or river, holding each other's hands. After changing cloths, they come home preceded by a procession, which varies in importance according to the wealth of the girl's family. Tom-toms and elephants usually form part of the procession, and saffron water is sprinkled. When they come home the doors of the house are all shut, which the Manavâlan is required to force open. He then enters the house, and takes his seat in the northern wing thereof. The aunt

and other female friends of the girl then approach, and give 564
sweetmeats to the couple. The girl then serves food to the boy, 613
and after taking their meals together from the same leaf, they 588
proceed to the pandal, where a cloth is severed into two parts,
and each part given to the Manavâlan and girl separately
in the presence of Enangans and other friends. The severing [586]
of the cloth is supposed to constitute a divorce."

If, as has been said, the "páttu" sung by the [533]
Brâhmani, in "*Rig Vêdaswaram*" is in substitution for
the Vêdas sung at the Nambûtiri's wedding—because
the Vêdas cannot be used by any but Brâhmans—this
part of the ceremonial seems to indicate imitation of the
Nambûtiris. The Brâhmani is not however a "Brâhman
lady" but merely represents one. In North Malabar she
is of the Nambisan caste.

The ceremony is much more analogous to that obtain- [171]
ing in the Bellary district and round about it, through
which women, called Basivis, are, after an initiatory
ceremony of devotion to a deity, compelled (under certain
conditions) to follow no rule of chastity, but whose
children are under no degradation, than to the initiation
of the Dêvadâsi in her career of harlotry.* It must be [735]
said, however, that the ceremony, more especially as
modified by poor people, when the Manavâlan is repre- [184]
sented by a clay figure adorned with flowers, the handi-
work of the girl's mother, looks very like it. But what
demands consideration now is the position of Manavâlan
to the bride. Does the ceremony confer on him any of
the rights of a husband? There is much diversity of
opinion on the point. Some say it does, while some say
it does not. It seems certain that, as a rule, there can be
no cohabitation between the two as a mere corollary of
the tâli-tying ceremony. Should there be three girls in a
family, *i.e.*, in the same taravâd house, aged, say, 9, 5
and 3, the ceremony is always done for all three at the
same time. The only condition as to age of the girl is
that the ceremony must be done before she reaches
puberty. The bridegroom (to call him so) is selected after
consulting agreement between his horoscope and the
girl's. He is seated beside her in the marriage pandal,
and he invests her with the tâli. They eat of the same [824]
plantain leaf (used as a plate throughout Malabar). They [415]
are placed in the same chamber, to go through the fiction

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* An account of the Basivis, their devotion to deities, etc., by the writer [113]
will be found in the "Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay,"
Vol. II., 6 (1891).

564
613 of cohabitation; and on the fourth day the bridegroom
588 severs his connection with the girl, symbolising divorce
by cutting into two pieces the cloth (called kachai cloth)
[184 which she wears. The tearing of the cloth is, however,
[586] confined to South Malabar. These are the essentials of
the ceremony, an adjunct to which is that, in spite of the
[715 divorce, the girl observes death-pollution when her
Manavâlan dies. The same Manavâlan may tie the tâli
[783] on any number of girls, during the same ceremony or at
any other time; and he may be old or young. He is
often an elderly holy Brâhman, who receives a small
present for his services. The ceremony is always the
occasion of feasting and jollification. The girl may
remove the tâli if she likes after the fourth day.

588 In some parts of Malabar there is no doubt that the
man who performs the rôle of Manavâlan is considered
to have some right to the girl, but in such a case it has
been already considered that he is a proper man to enter
into Sambandham with her. It will be as well to remark
here that almost invariably amongst the inferior races,
the aboriginals so to speak of Malabar, girls are married
[833] (their marriage is consummated) before puberty. The
fuss that was made a few years ago (by the shrieking
sisterhood) about the age of consent has had no effect
there.

613 The tâli-tying ceremony having been performed while
585 the girl is yet a child, the next step in the matter of
[588] her alliance with a man is the arrangement of the
Sambandham. As the rule nothing more than the consent
of the girl and of her guardian, the Kâranavan of
the family, is necessary. There is no religious formality.
The tâli-tying ceremony dispenses with everything of the
kind. There is, however, in some parts a tendency nowadays
"to surround the occasion of first cohabitation
with a more or less elaborate ceremonial." It is quite an
informal affair, arranged by the Kâranavans of the two
families. Many a time a young fellow of 22 or 24,
answering my question whether he had contracted
Sambandham with any one, replied that the head of his
family had not yet arranged a Sambandham for him.
The wishes of the contracting parties—for in great
measure it is a contract—and of the heads of the families
practically settle the matter. Should the parties find
they are unsuited, they part. There is no dragging on
under a bondage intolerable to both.

585 **The following account was given by Mr. Chandu**
184 **Menon (a Nâyar) to the Commission. He says:—**

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184 agree, a day is then and there fixed for the celebration of the
787 marriage. This date is also written down on two pieces of
cadjan, one of which is handed over to the bride's Kâranavan,
and the other to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and
574 the bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house, and
the former also receives presents in the shape of money or cloth;
and this preliminary ceremony, which is invariably performed
at all Putamuris in North Malabar, is called 'Putamuri Kurikkal,'
but is unknown in South Malabar.

"Some three or four days prior to the date fixed for the
celebration of the Putamuri, the bridegroom visits his Kâranavans
584 and elders in caste to obtain formal leave to marry. The
bridegroom on such occasion presents his elders with betel and
613 nuts, and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On the
day appointed the bridegroom proceeds, after sunset, to the
564 house of the bride, accompanied by a number of his friends.
He goes in procession, and is received at the gate of the house
by the bride's party, and is conducted with his friends to seats
431 provided in the tekkini, or southern hall of the house. There
the bridegroom distributes presents (*danam*) or money gifts to the
Brahmans assembled. After this the whole party is treated
[illegible] to a sumptuous banquet. It is now time for the astrologer to
787 appear, and announce the auspicious hour fixed. He does it
accordingly, and receives his dues. The bridegroom is then
taken by one of his friends to the *padinhatta* or principal room
of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought
with them a quantity of new cloths and betel leaves and
nuts. The cloths are placed in the western room of the
house, called padinhatta, in which all religious and other important
household ceremonies are usually performed. This room
will be decorated, and turned into a bed-room for the occasion.
There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps, and
Ashtamangaliam, which consists of eight articles symbolical of
mangaliam or marriage. These are rice, paddy, the tender leaves
of the cocoanut tree, an arrow, a looking glass, a well washed
cloth, burning fire, and a small round wooden box called
'cheppu' made in a particular fashion. These will be found
placed on the floor of the room aforesaid as the bridegroom
enters it. The bridegroom with his groom's-man enters the
room through the eastern door. The bride, dressed in rich cloth
and bedecked with jewels, enters the room through the western
door, accompanied by her aunt or some other elderly lady of her
family. The bride stands facing east with the Ashtamangaliam
and lit-up lamps in front of her. The groom's-man then hands
over to the bridegroom a few pieces of new cloth, and the bridegroom
puts them into the hands of the bride. This being done,
the elderly lady who accompanied the bride, sprinkles rice over

writes thus in speaking of the Nâyars :—"When the 581
man visits the woman he lays down his arms at the 585
door; but, if there are no arms at the door, any acquaintance may visit her. To visit the house when there are [201]
arms at the door, or remove them, is death." Now-a-days [178]
a man leaves his shoes outside the door. Equality of the [562]
sexes in all sexual matters, the man and woman being on
terms of equality, having equal freedom, is certainly an
uncommon merit in the Marumakkattâyam system.
Either party may terminate the union—even after one 586
night of hymeneal bliss; and those who are unsuited to
each other sexually, or in the way of temperament, in
fact in any way, may put an end to their union and turn
towards other partners. It may be thought that this
liberty induced perpetual change, so it is as well to state
here that it does nothing of the kind. Mere arbitrary
divorce is very rare. Permanent attachment is the rule. 581
The basis of the system seems to be that the Taravâd 613
estate is held in trust for the support of the females and
of their descendants in the female line. This trust is 421
placed in the hands of the Kâranavan, the senior male
member of the Taravâd who is the legal guardian of
every member of it, and whose control of the Taravâd
property is absolute. The odd feature in the Marumakkattâyam system is that a man has his nephews about (604)
him in the house, and not his sons. He lives in one [591]
house, while his wife and family live in another. That [184]
is, in South Malabar; in North Malabar they live
together.

When we come to consider the degrees of relationship 582
within which marriage is prohibited, we find the rule is 613
that persons descended from a common female ancestor
are not at liberty to marry. Those of the same Taravâd
can never intermarry; but this prohibition does not of
course extend to the children of a brother and a sister,
who are naturally of different Taravâds. Again, the
principle that "no member of the Taravâd of a deceased (587)
wife or husband (is) eligible as the second wife or husband is true only as far as the woman is concerned; for
a man may marry a woman of his deceased wife's
Taravâd. But he who does this is not in harmony with
social sentiment." We find this observance amongst the
forest Mûppans of Wynâd. In the case of a man's wife
dying, I found that a Mûppan could not take another
wife from her family.

The rule does not interfere with union between the
children (or their descendants) of a brother and sister

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[171] such children belonging of course, under the Marumakkattâyam system, to different Taravâds. We have seen already, when speaking of the Nambûtiris, that this rule of marriage between the children of a brother and sister, never between the children of two brothers or two sisters, is general throughout Southern India. It seems to be common, though there are exceptions, to the Brâhmans and the peoples commonly called Dravidian, with most of whom it is the most fitting marital union.

564 It will be interesting to add here a note on Sambandham as it is amongst the Akattu Chârna, or Akathithaparisha Nâyars (Akattu inside, parisha class),* by one of
553
585 themselves. The members of this clan being devoted to indoor services, chiefly writing and casting accounts. To those of the sub-clan attached to the Zamorin who were sufficiently capable to earn it, he gave the titular honour "Mênon," to be used as an affix to the name. The title Mênon is in general hereditary, but, be it remarked, many who now use it are not entitled to do so. Properly speaking only those whose investiture by the Zamorin or some other recognized chief is undisputed, they or their descendants (in the female line of course), may use it. Those invested pay a small fee to the Zamorin. A man known to me was invested with the title Mênon in 1895 by the Karimpuzha chief, who in presence of a large assembly said thrice "From this day forward I confer on Krishnan Nâyar the title of Krishna Mênon." Now-a-days be it said, the title Mênon is used by Nâyars of clans other than the Akattu Chârna. Those who belong to the sub-clan who owe Lordship to the Zamorin look to him even now to settle their caste disputes, and for permission to perform the tâlikettu and other important ceremonies. The ceremony to be described is that of this sub-clan.

564 As the old order changeth giving place to new in the
585 distribution of the honourable affix "Mênon," so too doth it change even in such an important piece of life as
178 marriage, or what under another name means the same thing amongst the Nâyars. It is truly sad to read of celebration of a Sambandham ceremony at Calicut whereat there was cake and wine for the guests, and (shades of all the departed!) a ring for the bride. The departure from national and therefore rational custom, for adoption of that which is neither custom nor cere-

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* For this note I am indebted to Mr. C. P. Raman Menon, B.A., a prominent Police official of Calicut.

564
monial when copied meaninglessly, is surely food for 585
painful reflection. 178

The ceremony to be described is not one of cake and
wine, for the doings of people who have reached that
bathos have little interest to the anthropologist, though
they may have some to the *observer* of social diversions,
but the genuine ceremony as done in orthodox fashion
in South Malabar without modern adornment will now
be described. My informant says in the first place [582]
the man should not enter into Sambandham with
a woman until he is 30. Now-a-days, when change
is running wild, the man is often much less. In [181]
North Malabar, which is much more conservative than [184]
the south, it was, however, my experience that Sambandham
was rare before 27 on the side of the
man. And now continue with the Note.[*] "The Kâranavan 585
and the women [†] of his household choose the 564
bride, and communicate their choice to the intending
bridegroom through a third party; they may not, dare 613
not speak personally to him in the matter. He approves.
The bride's people are informally consulted, and if they [787]
agree, the astrologer is sent for and examines the horoscopes
of both parties to the intended union. As a matter
of course these are found to agree, and the astrologer fixes
a day for the Sambandham ceremony. A few days
before this takes place two or three women of the bridegroom's
house visit the bride, intimating beforehand that
they are coming. There they are well treated with food
and sweetmeats, and when on the point of leaving they
inform the senior female that the bridegroom (naming
him) wishes to have Sambandham with—(naming her),
and such and such a day is auspicious for the ceremony,
the proposal is accepted with pleasure and the party
(from the bridegroom's house) returns home."

Preparations for feasting are made in the house of
the bride as well as in that of the bridegroom on the appointed
day. To the former all relations are invited for [574]
the evening, and to the latter a few friends who are
much of the same age as the bridegroom (for elders never
accompany him) are invited to partake of food at 7 or 8
P.M. and accompany him to the bride's house. After eating
they escort him, servants carrying betel leaves (one or
two hundred according to the means of the Taravâd),

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[*] Of which what follows is an abstract.

[†] My correspondent uses the word "Ladies." I prefer women, a finer word.

585 arecanuts and tobacco, to be given to the bride's household,
564 and which are distributed to the guests. When the
613 bride's house is far away the bridegroom makes his procession
thither from a neighbouring house. Arrived at
[276] the bride's house they sit a while and are again served
with food, after which they are conducted to a room
where betel and other chewing stuff is placed on brass
or silver plates (called thâlam). The chewing over,
sweetmeats are served, and then all go to the bridal
chamber, where the women of the house and others are
assembled with the bride, who, overcome with shyness,
hides herself behind the others. Here again the bridegroom
and his party go through more chewing while
they chat with the women. After a while the men withdraw,
wishing the couple all happiness; and then the
women, departing one by one leave the couple alone, one
of them shutting the door from the outside.

[431] "The Patter Brâhmans always collect on these occasions
and receive small presents (dakshina) of 2 to 4 annas
each, with betel leaf and areca nut from the bridegroom,
sometimes from the bride. A few who are invited
receive their dakshina in the bridal chamber; the others
[513] outside. [In a Nâyar house the sleeping rooms of the
men and women are separate; at different ends of the
[574] house.] Those of the bridegroom's party who live far
away are given sleeping accommodation at the bride's
house, with the men. About daybreak next morning the
bridegroom leaves the house with his party, leaving
under his pillow Rs. 8, 16, 32 or 64, according to his means
but never more than 64, which are intended to cover the
expenses of the wife's household on the ceremony. The
Sambandham is now complete. The girl remains in her
own Taravâd house, and her husband visits her there,
585 coming in the evening and leaving the next morning. A
564 few days after completion of the ceremony the senior
woman of the bridegroom's house sends some cloths,
613 including pavu mundu (superior cloths) and thorthu
602 mundu (towels) and some oil to the bride for her use for
[431] six months. Every six months she does the same, and
on festivals of the Ônam, Vishu; Thiruvathira she sends
[796] besides a little money, areca nut, betel nut and tobacco.
The money sent should amount to Rs. 4, or 8, or 16, or 32,
or 64; either one of these sums. Sums of the higher
numbers are very rarely sent.

"Before long the women of the husband's house
express a longing for the girl-wife to be brought to
their house, for they have not seen her yet. Again the

Again the 602 585
astrologer is requisitioned, and, on the day he fixes, two 564
or three of the women go to the house of the girl-wife, the
Ammâyi as they call her (literally "uncle's wife"). They 613
are well treated, and presently bring away the girl with [787]
them. As she is about to enter the gate house of her
husband's Taravâd, the stile of which she crosses right
leg first, two or three of the women meet her, bearing a
burning lamp and a brass plate (tâlam) and precede her
to the nalukattu of the house. There she is seated on a
mat, and a burning lamp and a nazhi (1 measure) of rice
and some plantains are placed before her. One of the
younger women [married or not I cannot say] takes up a
plantain and puts a piece of it in the Ammâyi's mouth; a
little ceremony called Madhuram Tital, or giving the
sweets for eating. She lives in her husband's house for [431]
a few days and is then sent back to her own with presents,
bracelets, rings or cloths, gifts of the senior
women of the house. After this she is at liberty to visit
her husband's house on any day, auspicious or inauspicious.

"In a big Taravâd, where there are many women, the Ammâyi does not, as a rule, disperse sympathy and good will in the household, and if she happens to live temporarily in her husband's house, as is sometimes though very rarely the case in south Malabar, and to be the wife of the Kâranavan, it is observed that she gets, more than her share of whatever good things may
be going; hence the proverb 'Ammâyi Ammayê Kallin- [539]
mel Vechchittu Mattoru Kallu Kondu Nârâyana'—'Place Ammâyi Amma on a stone and grind her with another stone.'"

Yet one more extract—a reference taken from my 595
notes. The Rev. S. Mateer, author of a well-known book on Travancore, where he resided something over a quarter of a century I think, informed me ten years ago—he was speaking of polyandry amongst the Nâyars of Travancore—that he had "known an instance of 6 brothers keeping 2 women, 4 husbands to one, and 2 to the other. In a case where 2 brothers cohabited with one woman and one was converted to Christianity, the other brother was indignant at the Christian's refusal to live any longer in this condition." I have not known an admitted instance of polyandry amongst the Nâyars of Malabar at the present day, but there is no doubt that if it does not exist now (and I think it does here and there),

595 it certainly did not long ago. Polyandry exists amongst other castes, as we shall see by and by.

58 611 We must now leave the subject of marriage, which, simple though it is, is like most simple things extremely difficult to describe. The marital relation of the Nâyar is a very natural and simple affair; yet it is the *point d'appuis* of that system of inheritance through women which was once much more common than it is now.

804 Let us hope it will remain unchanged, and that the Nâyar will be able to say always (in his own tongue), with more regard for concrete truth than poetic insight "Das ewig' weibliche ziet uns hinan."

BIRTH: ANTE-NATAL AND AFTER CEREMONIES.

843 The following very interesting note on the ceremonies connected with birth, those preceding it as well as those following it, has been very kindly given by Mr. U. Balakrishnan Nâyar; so I quote his own words:—

564 184 "A Nâyar woman has to observe certain ceremonies during pregnancy. First, during and after the seventh month of pregnancy, she (at least, among the well-to-do class) bathes, and worships in the temple, every morning; and eats before her morning meal, a small quantity of butter over which holy *mantrams* have been said by the temple priest or by Nambûtiris. This is generally done till delivery.

843 613 787 824 "*Puli-kuti.*—Another and even more important ceremony during pregnancy is the *puli-kuti* (lit., drinking tamarind juice). This is an indispensable ceremony, performed by the rich and poor alike, on a particular day in the ninth month. The day, nay, even the very hour is fixed by the local astrologer. The ceremony begins by the planting of a twig of the *ampasham* tree, on the morning of the day of the ceremony, in the principal courtyard *(natu-muttom)* of the *Taravâd.* At the appointed hour or *muhurtam*, the pregnant woman, after having bathed and properly attired, is conducted to a particular portion of the house (*vatakini* or northern wing), where she is seated, facing eastwards. The *Ammâyi* or 'uncle's wife,' whose presence on the occasion is essential, goes to the courtyard and plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the brother, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is necessary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his right-hand ring finger. Holding a

country knife *(pissan kathi)* in his left hand, which he 843 directs towards the mouth, he pours the tamarind juice 613 over this knife with his right hand three times, which dribbles down the knife into her mouth, and she drinks it. In the absence of a brother, some other near relation officiates. After she has swallowed the tamarind juice, she is asked to pick one out of several packets of different grains placed before her. The grain in the packet she happens to select is supposed to declare the sex of the child in her womb. The whole ceremony is wound [574] up by a sumptuous feast to all the relatives and friends of the family.

" *After Ceremonies.*—At delivery, women of the barber 846 caste officiate as midwives. In some localities, this duty 564 is performed by *Vêla* caste women. Pollution is observed 783 for fifteen days, and on every day, the mother wears cloths washed and presented her by a *Vannatti* or woman 613 of the Vannan * caste. On the fifteenth day is the [844] purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pollution, a man of the Atikkurissi clan sprinkles on the woman a [237] liquid mixture of oil, and the five products of the cow (*pancha gavya*), with gingelly seeds. Then the woman takes a plunge-bath and sits on the ground, near the tank or river. Some woman of the family, with a copper vessel in her hands, takes water out of the tank or river, and pours it on the mother's head as many as twenty-one times. (I am not aware if this practice is universal, though it certainly obtains in parts of South Malabar and even in North Travancore.) This done, she again plunges herself in the tank or river, from which she emerges thoroughly purified.

" It may be noticed that, before the mother proceeds to purify herself, the new-born babe has also to undergo some rite of purification. The babe is placed on the naked floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few drops of cold water on it and takes it in his hands. [828] The superstitious believe that the temperament of the child is determined by that of the person who thus sprinkles the water. All members of the *Taravâd* observe pollution for fifteen days immediately following the delivery, during which period they are prohibited from entering temples and holy places.

" *First Birthday Celebration.*—The twenty-seventh day 846 after the child's birth or the first recurring day of the 613 star under which it was born marks the next important 553

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* Over a great part of Malabar she would, however, be of the Tiyan caste.

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613 553 [574] event. On this day, the *Kârnavan* of the family gives to the child a spoonful or two of milk, mixed with sugar and slices of plantain. Then he names the child and calls it in the ear by the name* three times. This is followed by a feast to all friends and relatives, the expenses of which are necessarily met by the father of the child.

853 852 613 " *Chôrûn or First Meal of Rice.*—As is usual with the Nâyar every event is introduced by a ceremonial. The first meal of rice partaken by the child forms no exception to the rule. It must be remembered that the child is not fed on rice for some time after birth; the practice being to give it flour of dried plantain boiled with jaggery. There is a particular variety of plantain, known as *kunnan*, used for this purpose. The staple food of the Malayali, rice, is given the child, for the first time, generally during the sixth month, and is attended, [illegible] of course, with some ceremonial. Necessarily, the astrologer fixes the day; and at the auspicious hour, the child, bathed and adorned with ornaments (which it is the duty of the father to provide) is brought and laid on a plank. A plantain-leaf is spread in front of it and a lighted brass lamp, placed near. On the leaf are† served a small quantity of cooked rice—generally a portion of the rice offered to some temple divinity—some tamarind, salt, chillies, and sugar. Then the *Kâranavan* or the father, ceremoniously approaches and sits down facing the child. First, he puts in the mouth of the child a mixture of the tamarind, chillies and salt; then some rice; and lastly a little sugar.

[301] "Thenceforward, the ordinary food of the child is rice. It is usual on this occasion for relatives (and especially for the '*bandhus*,' such as the *Ammâyi* or 'uncle's wife') to adorn the child with gold bangles, rings and other ornaments. The *chôrûnû* or rice-giving ceremony is, in some cases, preferably performed in some famous temple, that at Guruvâyûr being a favourite one for this purpose.

[illegible] " *Child-birth—Position during.*—When a Nâyar woman is about to be delivered of a child, she is placed in a reclining position on a low wooden couch (Kottotam), her back supported by a companion, generally an old woman. The kottotam is very like, if not identical with, the couch on which the Nâyar has his oil bath. The 844 [352] surface of it is sloping, the higher end being where the head is laid, and it is scooped out so as to suit the curvatures of the body lying flat.* Lying on her back, her head is raised and the thighs are stretched wide apart. Very often she holds in each hand a rope suspended from the ceiling, by way of support. The child is [564] received by a woman of the barber caste."

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* In some places, the child is named only in the sixth month on the chôrûn day.

† In some places, all the curries, etc., prepared for the attendant feast are also served.

DEATH AND SUCCEEDING CEREMONIES.

When the dying person is about to embark for that 763 bourne from which no traveller returns, when the breath 613 is about to leave his body, the members of the household, and all friends who may be present, one by one pour a little water, a few drops from a tiny cup made of a leaf or two of the tulsi plant, into his mouth, holding in the hand a piece of gold or a gold ring; the idea being [823] that the water should touch gold ere it enters the mouth of the person who is dying. If the Taravâd is rich enough to afford it, a small gold coin, (a Râsi fanam, if one can be procured †) is placed in the mouth, and the lips are closed. As soon as death has taken place, the 764 corpse is removed from the cot or bed, and carried to the 613 vatakkini (a room in the northern end of the house) [824] where it is placed on long plantain leaves spread out on the floor; and while it is in this room, whether by day or [354] by night, a lamp is kept burning, and one member of the Taravâd holds the head in his lap and another the feet in the same way; and here the neighbours come to take a farewell look at the dead.

As the Malayâlis believe that disposal of a corpse by cremation or burial as soon as possible after death is conducive to the happiness of the spirit of the departed, no time is lost in setting about the funeral. The bodies of senior members of a Taravâd, male or female, are burned; those of children under two are buried; so too are the [766] bodies of all persons who have died of cholera or smallpox.‡ When preparations for the funeral have been [351] made, the corpse is removed to the natumuttam or central yard of the house if there is one (there always is

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* Every Nâyar, and for the matter of that, every Malayali, has an oil [515] bath about once a week or as often as he can afford. The person is well shampooed with gingelly oil.

† These are now rare.

‡ It is the same amongst the Khonds of Ganjam.

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613 [351] in the larger houses), and, if there is not, is taken to the front yard where it is again laid on plantain leaves. It is washed and anointed, the usual marks are made with sandalwood paste and ashes as in life, and it is neatly clothed. There is then done what is called the Potavekkuka ceremony or placing new cotton cloths (kóti mundu) over the corpse by the senior member of the (deceased's) Taravâd followed by all the other members, also sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and all relatives. These cloths are used for tying up the corpse when being [184] taken to the place of burial or cremation. In some parts of Malabar the corpse is carried on a bier made of fresh bamboos, tied up in these cloths, while in others it is carried (well covered in the cloths) by hand. In either [184] case it is carried by the relatives. Before the corpse is removed there is done another ceremony called Para Virakkuka (filling up pâras—a pâra is a measure nearly as big as a gallon). All adult male members of the Taravâd take part in it under the direction of a man of the Atikkurissi clan (who occupies the position of director of the ceremonies during the next fifteen days, receiving as his perquisite all the rice and other offerings made to the deceased's spirit). It consists in filling up three pâra measures with paddy, and one edangâli ($\frac{1}{10}$ of a pâra) with raw rice. These offerings of paddy and rice are placed very near the corpse, together with a (burning) lamp of the kind commonly used in Malabar, called nela villâku. If the Taravâd is rich enough to afford one, a silk cloth is placed over the corpse before removal for cremation.

As much fuel as is necessary having been got ready at the place of cremation, a small pit about the size of the corpse is dug, and across this are placed three long stumps of the plantain tree, one at each end, one in the middle; on which as a foundation the pyre is laid. The whole, or at least a part of the wood used should be that of the mango tree. As the corpse is being removed to the pyre, the senior Anandravan * who is next in age (junior) to the deceased, tears from one of the new cloths laid on the corpse a piece sufficient to go round his waist, ties it round his waist, and holds in his hand, or tucks into his cloth at the waist a piece of iron, generally a

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* The eldest male member of the Malabar Taravâd is called the Kâranavan, as noted already (Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1); all male members, brothers, nephews and so on, who are junior to him are called Anandravans of the Taravâd.

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long key. This individual is throughout *chief* among the offerers of "pindam" (balls of rice) to the deceased. 613

The corpse is laid on the bier, with the head to the south, with the fuel laid over it and a little camphor, sandalwood and ghee, if these things are within the means of the Taravâd. Here must be stated the invariable rule that no member of the Taravâd, male or female, who is older than the deceased shall take any part whatever in the ceremony, or in any subsequent ceremony following on the cremation or burial. All adult males junior to the deceased should be present when the pyre is lighted. The deceased's younger brother, or, if there is none surviving, his nephew (his sister's eldest son), sets fire to the pyre at the head of the corpse. If the deceased left a son, this son sets fire at the same time to the pyre at the feet of the corpse. In the case of the deceased being a woman, her son sets fire to the pyre; failing a son the next (junior) in age to her has the right to do it. It is a matter of great importance that the whole pyre burns at once: the greatest care is taken that it burns as a whole, consuming every part of the corpse. While the corpse is being consumed, all the members of the deceased's Taravâd who carried it to the pyre go and bathe in a tank (there is always one in the compound or garden around every Nâyar's house): the eldest, he who bears the piece of torn cloth and the piece of iron (the key), carries an earthen pot of water, and all return together to the place of cremation. It should be said that on the news of a death the neighbours assemble, assisting in digging the grave, preparing the pyre, and so on, and, while the members of the Taravâd go and bathe, those remain near the corpse. By the time the relatives return it is almost consumed by the fire, and the senior Anandravan carries the pot of water thrice round the pyre, letting the water leak out by making holes in the pot as he walks round. On completing the third round, he dashes the pot on the ground close by where the head of the dead had been placed. A small image of the deceased is then made out of raw rice * representing the deceased, and to this image a few grains of rice and gingelly seeds are offered. When this has been done the relatives go home and the neighbours depart, bathing before entering their houses.

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* The ceremony is called Veli Unka (?).

765 When the cremation has been done by night, the duty
782 of Sêshakriya (making offerings to the deceased's spirit)
●613 must be begun the next day between 10 and 11 A.M. and
is done on seven consecutive days. In any case the time
for this ceremony is after 10 and before 11 and it continues
for seven days. It is performed as follows. All male
members of the Taravâd younger than the deceased go
together to a tank and bathe, *i.e.*, they souse themselves
in the water, and return to the house. The eldest of them,
the man who tore off the strip of cloth from the corpse,
has with him the same strip of cloth and the piece of iron,
and all assemble in the central courtyard of the house,
where there has been placed ready by an Enangan—(one
of the Taravâd—of the same clan or sub-clan as that of
[582] the deceased : marriage must be admissible between the
two Taravâds)—some rice which has been half boiled, a
few grains of gingelly, a few leaves of the cherûla,* some
curds, a smaller measure † of paddy, and a smaller
measure ‡ of raw rice. These are placed in the north-east
corner with a lamp of the ordinary Malabar pattern. A
piece of palmyra leaf, about a foot or so in length and the
width of a finger, is taken, and one end of it knotted ; the
knotted end is placed in the ground, and the long end is
left sticking up. This represents the deceased. The rice
824 and other things are offered to this. The belief concerning
826 this piece of palmyra leaf is explained thus : There
764 are in the human body ten humours :—Vâyús ; Prânan ;
774 Apânan ; Samânan ; Udânan; Vyânan ; Nâgan ; Kûrman;
Krikalan ; Dêvadattan ; Dhananjayan. These are called
Dasaváyu, *i.e.*, ten airs. When cremation was done for
the first time, all these excepting the last, were destroyed
[789] by the fire. The last one flew up and settled on a palmyra
leaf. Its existence was discovered by some Brâhman
sages who, by means of mantrams (magic), forced it down
[782] to a piece of palmyra leaf on the earth. So it is thought
[775] that, by making offerings to this (Dhananjayan) leaf for
seven days, the spirit of the deceased will be mollified,
should he have any anger to vent on the living members
of the Taravâd.

824 The place where the piece of leaf is to be fixed has
765 been cleaned carefully, and the leaf is fixed in the centre
782 of this prepared surface. The offerings made to it go direct
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* *Ærna lanata* belonging to the natural order Acanthaceæ,

† Ari Edangâli : about the size of a quart.

‡ A nazhi : about ½ a pint.

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to the spirit of the deceased, and the peace of the Taravâd is ensured. The men who have bathed and returned have brought with them, plucked on their way back to the house, some grass (karuka pullu): they kneel in front of the piece of palmyra, with the right knee on the ground. Some of the grass is spread on the ground near the piece of leaf, and rings made with it are placed on the ring finger of the right hand by each one present. The first offerings consist of water, sandalwood paste and leaves of the cherîla : the eldest of the Anandravans leading the way. Boys need not go through the actual performance of offerings ; it suffices for them to touch the eldest as he is making his offerings. The half-boiled rice is made into balls (pindams) and each one present takes one of these in his right hand and places it on the grass near the piece of palmyra leaf. Some gingelly seeds are put into the curd, which is poured so as to make three rings round the pindams. It is poured out of a small cup made with the leaf on which the half-boiled rice had been placed. It should not be poured from any other kind of vessel. The whole is then covered with this same plantain leaf, some lighted wick is waved, and some milk is put under the leaf. It is undisturbed for some moments, and the leaf is tapped gently with the back of the fingers of the right hand. The leaf is then removed and torn in two at its midrib, one piece being placed on either side of the pindams. The ceremony is then over for the day. The performers rise, and remove the wet clothing they have been wearing.

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The eldest of the Anandravans should, it was omitted to mention, be kept somewhat separated from the other Anandravans while in the courtyard, and before the corpse is removed for cremation ; a son-in-law or a daughter-in-law, or some such kind of relation remaining, as it were, between him and them. He has had the piece of cloth torn from the covering of the corpse tied round his waist, and he has had the piece of iron (usually a key) in the folds of his cloth, or stuck in his waist during the ceremony which has just been described. Now, when it has been completed, he ties the piece of cloth to the pillar of the house nearest to the piece of palmyra leaf which has been stuck in the ground, and puts the piece of iron in a safe place. The piece of palmyra leaf is covered with a basket. It is uncovered every day for seven days at the same hour, while the same ceremony is repeated. The balls of rice (pindams) are removed by women and girls of the Taravâd who are junior to the deceased. They

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765 place them in the bell-metal vessel in which the rice was
boiled. The senior places the vessel on her head, and
782 leads the way to a tank, on the banks of which the rice is
613 thrown. It is hoped that crows will come and eat it; for
[775 if they do, the impression is received that the deceased's
spirit is pleased with the offering; but if somehow it is
[825] thought that the crows will not come and eat it, the rice is
[231] thrown into the tank. Dogs are not to be allowed to eat it.
The women bathe after the rice has been thrown away.

765 When the ceremony which has been described has
613 been performed for the seventh time, *i.e.*, on the seventh day
after death, the piece of palmyra leaf is removed from the
574 ground, and thrown on the ashes of the deceased at the
783 place of cremation. During these seven days no member
[824 of the Taravâd goes to any other house. The house of the
dead and all its inmates are under pollution: no outsider enters it but under ban of pollution, which is, however, removable by bathing. A visitor entering the house of the dead during these seven days must bathe before he can enter his own house. During these seven days the Kâranavan of the family receives visits of condolence from relatives and friends to whom he is "at home" on Monday, Wednesday or Saturday. They sit and chat, chew betel and go home, bathing ere they enter their houses.

[184] It is said that in some parts of Malabar the visitors
[431] bring with them small presents in money or kind to help
the Kâranavan through the expenditure to which the funeral rites necessarily put him.

765 To hark back a little, it must not be omitted that on
613 the third day after the death, all those who are related by
marriage to the Taravâd of the deceased combine and give a good feast to the inmates of the house and to the neighbours, who are invited, one man or one woman from each house. The person so invited is expected to come. This feast is called Patni Karigi. On the seventh day a return feast will be given by the Taravâd of the deceased to all relatives and neighbours.

Between the seventh and fourteenth day after death no
[783] ceremony is observed; but the members of the Taravâd
remain under death pollution, and then on the fourteenth day comes the Sanchayanam. It is the disposal of the calcined remains; the ashes of the deceased. The male members of the Taravâd go to the place of cremation and, picking up the pieces of unburnt bones which they find there, place these in an earthen pot which has been sun-dried—not burnt by fire in the usual way—cover up

the mouth of this pot with a piece of new cloth, and, all 765 following the eldest who carries it, proceed to the nearest 613 river (it must be running water), which receives the remains of the dead. The men then bathe and return home. In some parts of Malabar the bones are collected on the seventh day, but it is not orthodox to do so. Better [778] by far than taking the remains to the nearest river is it to take them to some specially sacred place, Benares, Gâya, Ramêsvaram, or even to some place of sanctity much nearer home, as to Tirunelli in Wynâd, and there dispose of them in the same manner. The bones or ashes of any one having been taken to Gâya and there deposited in the river, the survivors of the Taravâd have no need to continue the annual ceremony for that person. This is called "Ashtagâya Shraddham." It puts an end to the need for all earthly ceremonial. It is believed that the collection and careful disposal of the ashes of the dead gives peace to his spirit, and, what is more important, the pacified spirit will not thereafter injure the living members of the Taravâd, cause miscarriage to the women, possess the men (as with an evil spirit), and so on.

Then on the fifteenth day after death is the purificatory 765 ceremony. Until this has been done, any one touched 613 by any member of the Taravâd should bathe before he 783 enters his house or partakes of any food. A man of the [564] Athikkurisi clan officiates. He sprinkles milk oil in which have been put some gingelly seeds (all together) over the persons of those under pollution. This sprinkling [465] and the bath which follows it removes the death pollution. The purifier receives a fixed remuneration for his office on this occasion, as well as when there is a birth in the Taravâd.

In the case of death of a senior member of a Taravâd, 554 well-to-do and reckoned as of some importance, there is 621 the feast called Pinda Atiyantaram on the sixteenth day 765 after death, given to the neighbours and friends. The word neighbours, as used here, does not mean those who live close by, but, owing to the custom of Malabar under which each house is in its own paramba (garden or enclosure) which may be a large one, those of the caste living within a considerable area round about. I am not sure whether in connection with these ceremonies there is mutual assistance in preparation for the funeral; or whether there is any recognized obligation between members of the same amsham, dêsam or tara; or whether this kind of mutual obligation obtains generally between any Taravâd and those of caste round about, irrespective
of s.a boundaries

All this over

the only thing to be done for the deceased is the annual 769
shraddham, or yearly funeral commemorative rite. Rice
balls (pindams) are made and given to crows. Clapping [825]
of hands announces to these birds that the rice is being
thrown for them, and, should they come at once and eat
it, it is obvious that the spirit of the deceased is pleased
with the offering, and is not likely to be troublesome.
But, on the other hand, should they not come and eat, it
is evident that the spirit is displeased, and the Taravâd
had better look out.

The ceremonial connected with the funeral rites which 771
have been described, illustrates the immense difference
which exists, as it does in the case of all peoples more or
less cultured, between the primitive belief of the race, and
the higher, the more abstract, religion which they believe
they believe. With races, as with children, the earliest
associations are the strongest, and persist through the life
of the race as through the life of the individual. The
higher power of reasoning which comes with higher
development does not disperse them altogether. The 775
people who practise these rites are good Hindus, and,
according to the theory of their Hindu religion, the spirit
which is emancipated from the body at death at once
inhabits another body, for suffering or for enjoyment
measured by the deserts of the bodily existence which
has just ceased. This is the higher religion. And yet [822]
they admit that the spirit is connected with the shadow,
not with the breath;—and feel in their hearts that it still [782]
lingers in the house and absorbs the essence of the
ingredients of the food offered to it; that it must be
propitiated or it will cause harm to the living. This is the
primitive religion. It is supposed that the spirits of those
whose ashes are deposited at Benares or other place of
sanctity, and for whose sake alms are given to Brâhmans,
remain at those holy spots, and become more and more
god-like. This is a mixture of both. We are here
concerned with facts rather than theories and, as much
has been said already of this side of the subject of
comparative religions, we may proceed with our facts.
The spirits of those who have committed suicide or met [766]
death by any violent means are always particularly vicious
and troublesome to the Taravâd, their spirit possessing [613]
and rendering miserable some unfortunate member
of it. Unless pacified they will ruin the Taravâd, so [782]
Brâhman priests are called in and appease them by means
of Tilahômam, a rite in which sacrifical fire is raised, and
ghee, gingelly and other things are offered through it.

796 Before
[793] day-break of the first day the ordinary temple priests, a
Mûssad, will leave the temple after having swept up
and made it clean; and (before day-break also) five
Nambûtiris will enter it, bearing with them "Sudhi
796 Kalasam." The Kalasam is on this occasion made of the
778 five products of the cow, *i.e.* (panchagavyam) together
[237] with some water, a few leaves of the banyan tree (Arayâl)
and Darbha grass, all in one vessel. Before being
brought to the temple, mantrams or magic verses will
[783] have been said over it. The contents of the vessel are
sprinkled all about the temple, and a little is put in the
well, thus purifying the temple and the well. The
Nambûtiris will then perform the usual morning worship,
and either immediately after it or very soon afterwards
they leave the temple, and the Mûssad, the ordinary
[613] priest, returns and resumes his office. The temple belongs
to four Taravâds, and no sooner has it been purified than
the Kâranavans of these four Taravâds, virtually the
joint-owners of the temple (known as Urâlas) present to
the temple servant (known as a Pishârodi) the silver flag
of the temple which has been in the custody of one of
them since the last festival. The Pishârodi receives it
and hoists it in front of the temple (to the east), thus
signifying that the festival has begun. While this is
being done, emphasis and grandeur is given to the occasion
[201] by the firing off of miniature mortars such as are
common at all South Indian festivals; and, after the
[411] flag is hoisted, there are hoisted all round the temple
small flags of coloured cloth. For the next few days
[788] there is nothing particular to be done beyond the procession
morning, noon and night; the image of Bhagavati
being carried on an elephant to an orchestra of
drums, and cannonade of the little mortars. All those
who are present are supposed to be fed from the temple.
796 There is a large crowd. On the morning of the fifth day
564 a man of the washerman (he is also a tailor: Vannân)
caste will announce to the neighbours by beat of tom-tom
that there will be made a procession of Bhagavati issuing
[202] from the gates of the temple and passing round about.
Like all those who are in any way connected with the
[188] temple, this man's office is hereditary and he lives to a
small extent on the bounty of the temple, *i.e.*, he holds a
[425] little land on nominal terms from the temple property, in
consideration for which he must fulfil certain requirements
for the temple as on occasions of festivals. His
office also invests him with certain rights in the community.
The Vannân has, I believe, immense power

635 was in Calicut,* and it has always been necessary for
the new Zamorin to come to this fort in Calicut in a very
formal manner. The residences, the kôvilagams of the
various branches of the family, lie far to the eastward.
The heir to the Zamorinship must make his formal entry
into Calicut, for until he does so he is not, strictly
speaking, the Zamorin. There is much obscurity as to
details of the ceremonial, and I have not been able to
note these satisfactorily, so will state merely so much as
is undoubtedly correct. The new Zamorin comes to the
bank of the Kallai river adjoining Calicut. There he is
asked some questions, and he crosses this river in a
boat—not over the bridge. Arrived on the Calicut side
he must partake of some betel-leaf from a Mâppila man
dressed as a (Mâppila) woman, or, as some say, from a
Mâppila woman† and he says that he assumes the title of
Zamorin and rules until his uncle returns. The betel-
leaf, received from a (Muhammadan) Mâppila, which he
[783] chews, defiles him. He has lost his status in the caste,
and he is supposed to be henceforth celibate. It would
seem that this old world ceremony is likely to follow the
track along which so much of what is interesting in
India is disappearing. The late Zamorin never went
through it, and he was therefore never, properly speaking,
● [613] the Zamorin. He held the title perfunctorily, and he
was the kârnavan of the immense property of the family;
but he could not go "in procession" as Zamorin.‡
There are three unpleasant concomitants to the ceremony.
[834] It costs much money. It involves degradation in caste.
It compels chastity.

182 The other odd custom is not one affecting merely an
562 individual and a few with him, but it is a sexual one, and

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611 * There is now no sign of it, though the site is known.

† Those who say that a woman gives the betel-leaf say, very reasonably, that a Mâppila man would never for any consideration or purpose wear a woman's garb. But, on the other hand, it is said the person *is* and must be a man, and that he dresses for this occasion only, as a woman.

‡ The Zamorin was in Calicut but once since he became Zamorin on the occasion of his visit to His Excellency the Governor of Madras in 1896, and then infringed custom by coming to Calicut without previously undergoing the ceremony. Owing to a death in the family he was under pollution and therefore unable to undertake the ceremony at that time, so he came by train. These old-fashioned customs, written or unwritten, take no count of trains. For example, the modern pilgrims from Northern India find the train very convenient when they wish to visit Rameshvaram. The penance of a life is reduced to a few days in a train. What would the old sages say! So the Zamorin came by train. But he could not go "in procession" along the road *as Zamorin*, and was obliged to make his visit as an ordinary grandee.

APPENDIX A.

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764 [184] The account of the funeral ceremonies which has been given is not, of course, full and accurate as regards all the clans; but it is precise as regards one, and suffices for the present to give a clear idea of the ceremonies as performed by all. There are many interesting features in the ceremonies as performed by the Kiriattil clan. Want of space forbids more than the briefest mention of some of these.

764 613 564 Those who carry the corpse to the pyre are dressed as women, their cloths being wet, and each carries a knife on his person. Two junior male members of the Taravâd thrust pieces of mango wood into the southern end of the burning pyre, and, when they are well lighted, throw them over their shoulders to the southwards without looking round. Close to the northern end of the pyre two small sticks are fixed in the ground, and tied together with a cloth, over which water is poured thrice. All members of the Taravâd prostrate to the ground before the pyre. They follow the Enangru carrying the pot of water round the pyre, and go home without looking round.

They pass to the northern side of the house under an arch made by two men, standing east and west, holding at arms length, and touching at the points, the spade that was used to dig the pit under the pyre, and the axe with which the wood for the pyre was cut or felled.

After this is done the "kodali karma" ceremony, using the spade, the axe and a big knife. These are placed on the leaves where the corpse had lain. Then follows circumambulation and prostration by all; and the leaves are committed to the burning pyre.

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/For information on the function of the Taravād as a clan, lineage and matrilineal household unit, the researcher is advised to check all three categories listed above./

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121 be elucidated only in terms of a psycho-analytic hypothesis. Part V of the essay is therefore
[588] an attempt to try out a psycho-analytic approach to Hindu ritual, and to show, with reference
to one ceremony, that this approach permits a deeper analysis than is possible if we limit ourselves to a discussion of social function.

The use by anthropologists of psycho-analytic findings to interpret primitive myth and ritual is familiar from modern American writings; it has scarcely been accepted by British anthropologists. I admit that, for anthropologists, psycho-analytic theories must in the long run depend for their authority on analyses of a significant number of individuals in the society whose symbolism it is hoped to interpret. Such data are not, however, at present forthcoming, and in many Indian groups it is doubtful if they will be forthcoming before the myths and rites have died out. In the meantime, as I hope to show, the results of psycho-analytic work in the West can give us insights into the probable unconscious motives behind primitive religious practices, and allow us to formulate new if tentative hypotheses on the connexions between the kinship structure of a group and its religious symbolism.

[127] This essay therefore, while confined to the analysis of one ceremony, fulfils the terms of the Curl Bequest Competition, since it incorporates in a single theory field data recently collected on four Malabar kinship systems; uses the material of other anthropologists (see Aiyappan 1942, 1944; Dube 1953) who have worked on Indian initiation rites in the past ten years, to advance a sociological interpretation of these rites; and tests, with reference to these rites, certain hypotheses of the British school of psycho-analysts put forward in recent years.[1]

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PART I. THE NAYAR *Tāli*-RITE IN SOUTH MALABAR AND COCHIN

175 THIS AREA IS IN THE CENTRE OF THE MALABAR COAST, south of the Kora River and north
564 of the Travancore-Cochin boundary. Before 1792, it comprised the mutually hostile kingdoms
of the Zamorin of Calicut, the Raja of Walluvanād, and the Maharaja of Cochin. The area
184 was temporarily conquered by the Zamorins in the late 15th century and Cochin and Walluvanād were made feudatory kingdoms. Probably for this reason, the Nayar sub-castes of
[131] Walluvanād and Cochin correspond closely to those of Calicut, since they owed their existence to a political system common to these three kingdoms. By contrast, the kingdoms to the north and south, where the Zamorins failed to penetrate, had different political systems and correspondingly different hierarchies of Nayar sub-castes. Today, the Nayars of South Malabar and Cochin still show greater cultural similarity, feel greater unity, and intermarry more freely than they do with Nayars to the north or to the south.

175 At the head of each of the central kingdoms was a royal matrilineage. Being at enmity,
613 the royal lineages disputed for rank, would not intermarry, and, though exogamous, formed
each a separate caste. Each however acknowledged itself inferior to the Nambûdiri Brahmans
564 (landlords and priests) whose separate caste-organization extended throughout the Malabar
635 Coast, and who were above and outside the laws of the separate kingdoms.

Below the royal lineages came the Sāmantans, chiefs (*nâduvaris*) of districts (*nâds*). These
175 owed allegiance to the Raja and had administrative control over the next sub-caste, of Kiriyattil Nayars (called Vellayma Nayars in Cochin), the headmen (*desavaris*) of villages (*desams*).
564 Below the Kiriyattils came three parallel sub-castes: Sûdra Nayars, Charna Nayars (respectively called Illath Sûdras and Swaroopattil Sûdras in Cochin), and Pallichans. Sûdra Nayars
631 were hereditary tenants and retainers in villages where the land was owned by a patrilineal
family of Nambûdiri Brahmans. Charna Nayars were retainers in villages owned by *nâduvari*
613 or *desavari* lineages. Pallichans owed similar allegiance in villages owned by a branch of the

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[1] For the psycho-analytic interpretation of this essay I am chiefly indebted to Freud (1913, 1918, 1919), Ernest Jones (1931, 1951), Melanie Klein (1932), and Roheim (1950).

Nayar

royal lineage. The retainer sub-castes disputed for rank and, in their separate villages, held 175
the same rights of administration over the lower castes. In all these sub-castes, including 564
the royal lineage, men were trained from the age of seven as soldiers in village gymnasia
headed by military leaders (Asāns), and formed a permanent, mobile militia of the king- 613
dom. Below the retainer sub-castes in rank came the small, non-military Nayar servant sub-
castes of oil-mongers, funeral-priests, washermen, and barbers.[1] Quite apart from these 631
Brahman and Nayar sub-castes, in a separate area of the village lived the lower patrilineal [201]
castes of tenants and menials and the lowest, 'exterior' castes of serfs. [566]

The Nayar Kinship System. The Nayar lineage (*taravād*) is exogamous and matrilineal kin-
ship terms are extended throughout its range. Its members are united by the observance of 613
fifteen days' ritual pollution at a birth or death, and traditionally by worship of the spirits
of dead heads of the lineage, and of a group of totemic snakes. The lineage is divided into [601]
small segments, which I call property-groups, each three to five generations deep. Each group [783]
is headed by its eldest man (*kāranavan*) who is the legal guardian of its members and controls [771]
their property.

The property-group was also until recently the dwelling-group. Residence was, and is [769]
still in some houses, uxorilocal: a husband visits his wife after supper and leaves before break- [592]
fast. Traditionally, a woman might have any number of lovers of appropriate sub-caste,
and a man any number of mistresses. This custom of combined polyandrous and polygynous [591]
unions, besides being consistent with a strong matrilineal lineage system, was almost certainly
associated with the occupation of Nayar men as soldiers, since it began to die out shortly after [595]
the armies were disbanded, about 1810, and a hundred years before the lineage showed signs [178]
of disintegration.

The rules of mating were as follows. Sex relations were prohibited within the lineage, 613
and with more than one man or one woman of the same lineage. The Nayar servant sub-
castes of oil-mongers, funeral-priests, washermen, and barbers were endogamous, as were 582
all the lower patrilineal castes and the serf-castes. Within the range of military and ruling
sub-castes (except for the royal lineages which admitted no peers), all unions were permissible 564
outside the lineage and the range of prohibited affines, and within the sub-caste. Furthermore,
these sub-castes were knit together by 'hypergamous' unions between women of lower and
men of higher sub-caste. Members of the three retainer sub-castes, which disputed for rank,
had only temporary and sporadic sex-relations across sub-caste boundaries. These took place
during war when soldiers were permitted to contravene the normal rules against dining
with or touching members of other retainer sub-castes and might enter each others' houses
in order to eat and sleep. More permanent relationships were encouraged between women
of the retainer sub-castes and Kiriyattil, Sāmantan, royal, or Nambūdiri men; between
Kiriyattil women and Sāmantan, royal, or Nambūdiri men; between Sāmantan women and
royal or Nambūdiri men; and between royal women and Nambūdiri men. The royal line-
ages, acknowledging no others as peers, were obliged to marry all their women upwards
and all their men downwards. The Walluvanād and Cochin princesses married Nambūdiri
men, the princes Sāmantan, Kiriyattil, or retainer-women. The Zamorins at first married only
some of their women to Nambūdiris, and the rest to men of the more ancient royal lineages
of Beypore, Bettem, and Kodungalur, all of whom had been conquered by the Zamorins
and made honoured vassals in their kingdom. At some time in the 18th century, the Zamorin's
lineage gave up this practice and began to marry its women only to Nambūdiris, while con-
tinuing to marry its men to Sāmantan, Kiriyattil, and retainer-Nayar women.

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[1] Respectively called Vettukads, Attikurssis (Chidigans in Cochin), Veluthedans, and Vilakkatalavans. The small temple-servant castes who rank between Nambūdiris and Nayars and were also concerned in hypergamous marriages are for lack of space excluded from this discussion.

564 Among Nambûdiris only the eldest son of the patrilineal family might take one or more
582 wives from his caste and beget children for his family. Younger sons might form liaisons
421 only with Nayar women, their children being Nayar by matrilineal descent. Nambûdiri
younger sons, like unmarried Nambûdiri women (of whom there were many), had rights
to maintenance from the ancestral estate but might not divide the property. These customs
ensured the stability of the Nambûdiri estate by preventing it from increasing in numbers
and splitting into segments.

595 In all the matrilineal castes the husband, whether alone or of a group, had none but
sexual rights in his wife and few economic obligations. Sex-relations were called *sambandham*
[833] ('joining together'), and were initiated without religious rites. On his first visit the lover
[431] customarily presented the woman with a loin-cloth before her matrilineal kin. He might
also place a sovereign under the pillow before leaving next morning, but neither gift was
[843] obligatory. When a woman became pregnant, she must name one or more men of appropriate
sub-caste as possible fathers: this vindicated her from the charge of cohabitation with a low-
[851] caste man. The men named must jointly meet the expenses of her delivery; their payment
of this sum to the barber-midwife was a public acknowledgment that the child had been
[431] licitly begotten by a man of correct sub-caste. In addition, her lovers provided a woman with
bathing-oil, clothing, and ceremonial gifts of vegetables at the three main festivals of the year.
These payments were a sign of their continued association with her. Beyond this, a lover had
no obligations to his mistress; either of them might stop cohabitation at will.

595 With polyandrous unions, the physiological fatherhood of a child was often unknown.
851 Even when known, the father had no rights in nor obligations to his children. All the current
lovers of the mother were called *acchan* (father) but kinship terms were not extended to their
601 lineage-kin. Though he might play with his children, the father might not dispute their
564 *kāranavan*'s authority. In hypergamous unions, the higher caste father might not eat in the
house of his mistress, and, after taking a bath in the morning, might not touch her nor her
[613] children.

The Nayar Tāli-*Rite*. Though the first *sambandham* of a girl began without ceremony
613 shortly before or after puberty, she must before puberty go through the *tālikettukalyānam*.
This was collectively conducted by the lineage every ten to twelve years for all its immature
588 girls. If a girl matured before the rite was performed, she must theoretically be cast out by
[881] her lineage and banished from her village. In fact, my informants said that in this event, the
first menstruation (normally marked by public rites) would be kept secret by the lineage until
after the *tāli*-rite could be performed.

The central rite of this ceremony was, as in the ordinary marriage of Tamil patrilineal castes and of the Nambûdiris, the tying of a gold ornament (*tāli*) strung on a thread of white silk, round the neck of the girl by a ritual bridegroom (*manavalan*).

613 In the retainer sub-castes the Nayar lineages of a village, or in some cases of a group of
villages, formed a local sub-caste group (*tara*). Each lineage was linked by ties of ritual co-
621 operation to two or more other lineages of the group. These linked lineages were called
564 *enangar*. *Enangar* relations were reciprocal but not exclusive, so that in a group of eight lineages,
lineage A might be *enangar* to B, C, D, and F; B to A, E, and F; C to A, H, and G; E to B,
H, and G; F only to A and B; and H to E, D, and C. A chain of *enangar* relationships thus
indirectly linked all lineages of the local sub-caste group. *Enangar* lineages must send repre-
sentatives to ceremonies of the linked lineage, e.g. the termination of birth and death pollu-
[692] tions and the first menstruation of a girl. *Enangar* must also take note of breaches of caste
law by members of their linked lineages and report such culprits for trial by the *tara* assembly.
613 They were thus the formal links between a lineage and its assembly: they represented the
local sub-caste group (called the *enangu*) to the individual lineages. In ceremonies, they played

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much the same part as did its maternal and affinal kinsmen to a patrilineal lineage in the
lower castes. Individual *enangar* were moreover often of course affines (*bandhus*) to members 613
of the lineage. But among Nayars, the marriage-tie was so slender that individual affinal
bonds were not, it seems, strong enough to unite the lineage to the rest of the sub-caste group.
This was achieved instead by a hereditary relationship between lineages as groups, which [581]
persisted irrespective of the making and breaking of marriage ties between them.

In these retainer sub-caste groups the *tāli* must be tied by an *enangan*. Each girl had a
separate bridegroom, usually a youth who might have already formed *sambandham* relationships 588
of his own. The *tāli*-tiers were chosen at a local assembly. The choice was made by the village
astrologer, who compared the horoscopes of the girls with those of suitable young men and 613
fixed the auspicious date and time for the ceremony to take place. 564

In Kiriyattil, Samantan, and royal lineages, whose women frequently or invariably [787]
married men of higher sub-caste, the *tāli*-tier was chosen from the appropriate higher sub-caste. Women of village headmen's lineages were commonly 'tied' by men of their district headman's lineage, and Sāmantan women and Cochin princesses by Nambūdiri Brahmans. Calicut princesses had the *tāli* tied by men of Kodungalur, one of the ancient ruling lineages which had been conquered by Calicut. Similarly, Walluvanād princesses had the *tāli* tied by men of the lineage of Beypore, a more ancient and therefore higher-ranking lineage than their own of an adjacent small kingdom which was also feudatory to Calicut. In these sub-castes the 'bridegroom' was usually an elderly man.

The account which follows was given by Sūdra Nayars of Pālakkara, the Cochin village 121
where I worked. In Pālakkara, the *tāli*-rite in its full form has not been performed for twenty-
two years, and, like many of the traditional rites of Nayars, it is doubtful if it will ever be 588
performed again. This description refers to this most recently held ceremony, at which the [115]
tālis were tied for nineteen girls, ranging in age from two to twelve, of a lineage comprising
twelve property-groups. [114]

The ceremony required the co-operation of the whole village, which at that time was [178]
coterminous with the *tara*. It was held in the lineage's oldest ancestral house. A shed of bamboo
and palm-fronds was erected before the house, the first corner-post, of areca-palm wood,
being planted ceremonially by the carpenter. A man of the temple-servant caste of Kurups 588
drew a picture of the Malabar goddess Bhagavadi on the floor of the shed, of the type drawn 346
in the village Bhagavadi temple at festivals to the goddess. Nayar men of the village then
went and cut down a branch of the milk-exuding tree of Bhagavadi from near the village 621
temple. This they planted near the corner-post in the floor of the shed, in order, informants
said, 'to bring Bhagavadi to the *taravād* and set up a temple in the house'. A plank of wood 532
of the same tree was set in the shed for each girl to sit on in turn. 564

All *enangar* of the lineage, and representatives of every other Nayar house in the village,
attended the four days of ceremonies. On the first morning, the girls went in procession to 588
the shrine of the lineage's *dharma devi* (goddess of moral law). This goddess, represented by a
stone image, is the lineage's private Bhagavadi. She is propitiated annually with cooked food 613
to ward off sickness and misfortune. Similar offerings were made now, and the procession [776]
returned. Young men of the lineage then went to meet the bridegrooms, who arrived on
elephants with their male age-mates, accompanied by music. At the gate married women of [782]
the lineage met them carrying brass plates each containing a lit wick, paddy, rice, and a spray
of coconut flowers. The bridegrooms' feet were washed by brothers of the girls and they were 588
seated in the marriage-shed. Near the picture of Bhagavadi were laid paddy and rice, coconut flowers, the sacred brass lamp of the household, and a tray of eight auspicious objects (*ashtamangalyam*). These included a woman's loin-cloth, a rouge-box, a bell-metal mirror, an arrow, a coconut-spray, rice, paddy and a lit wick; they figure also in the Nambūdiri

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a Sanskrit word meaning 'the noble one') the Malayalam word used by Nayars for the *genitor* and all lovers of the mother. The *appan* had no obligations to nor rights in a child except that, at his death, the child observed pollution. Nevertheless, Pālakkara informants stressed that the *appan* was a child's 'real father', as the *tāli*-rite was a woman's 'real marriage'. 184 595 851

In Walluvanād and Calicut a different custom prevailed. After the final feast, the couples repaired to the marriage shed, where each ritual bridegroom tore in two the loin-cloth which had been worn during the three days of seclusion by his bride, retaining one half and handing the other to the girl. This ritual divorce indicated that the bride, though still in the status of a married woman, was now free to cohabit with whom she wished. She might however still take as lover the bridegroom who had divorced her. In spite of the 'divorce', the bride and her children observed pollution at the death of the bridegroom. In those lineages where the *tāli* was tied by a man of higher sub-caste, no cloth was severed after the rite, but the bridegroom, being an elderly man, was unlikely to cohabit with the girl again. However, she must, with her children, observe pollution at his death. 588 586 184 [765]

At some periods and in some areas of South Malabar and Cochin it seems that the ritual bridegroom was forbidden to enter into *sambandham* with his bride. In 1510 Barbosa stated that the *tāli*-tier was sometimes a 'relation' of the girl, and in this case, when he had tied the *tāli*, he must go away 'without touching her nor more to say to her on account of being her relation'. If, however, he was not a 'relation', 'he may remain with her if he wish it, but he is not bound to do so if he do not desire it' (*ibid.* p. 124). Unfortunately, Barbosa did not define the categories of 'relations' who might tie the *tāli*, but the accounts of all other writers leave no doubt that the ritual bridegroom could never have been a matrilineal kinsman of the girl. It is probable that, the *tāli* being tied either by an *enangan* or by some elderly man of higher sub-caste from which the lineage was wont to draw lovers, the ritual bridegroom might sometimes be a man who had previously had relations with some older woman of the girl's lineage. In this case he would be prohibited from entering into *sambandham* with her by the rule which forbids a man to have relations, serially or concurrently, with two women of the same lineage. 588 184 582 [613] [114]

Buchanan, an East India Company doctor, seems to assume that the *tāli*-tier must deflower the bride, but might never cohabit with her thereafter. In 1800 he wrote of South Malabar Nayars: 'The Nayars marry before they are ten years of age, in order that the girls may not be deflowered by the regular operations of nature; but the husband never thereafter cohabits with his wife. Such a circumstance, indeed, would be considered as very indecent' (Buchanan 1807, p. 411). But Buchanan's account may be untrustworthy, since he later says of North Malabar Nayars: 'The female Nayars, while children, go through the ceremony of marriage, both with Nambouries and Nayars; but here, as well as in the south, the man and wife *never* cohabit' (*ibid.* p. 513; my italics), thus contradicting his earlier statement that the 'bridegroom' must deflower the bride. However, Logan (1887, p. 135), though he does not say whether the *tāli*-tier was expected to deflower the girl, states that in South Malabar the ritual husband might not solicit his 'wife's' favours in after-life. 588 833 114

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Since I have not seen the *tāli*-rite, but relied on informants' statements, the above account is necessarily incomplete. I now add details provided by earlier writers. 114

For Cochin, Anantha Krishna Iyer (1909–12, II, pp. 22–9) reports that in privileged families, the Maharaja gave permission for the rite, and the woman's kin made presents to him and to important Nambūdiris before it could take place. In retainer-lineages where an *enangan* tied the *tāli*, the Asān (military leader and, in modern times, schoolmaster) of the village must be present to give permission, and was paid money and foodstuffs by the woman's *kāranavan*. Similarly, in a Walluvanād village I visited, the *tāli* was tied in the presence of the *desavari*, who received gifts for his consent. N. Subramania Aiyar, quoted by Thurston & 124 588 184 431

588 184 431 Rangachari (1909, V, p. 320), reports that in Travancore, the 'leading villager' gave his consent and received gifts from the bridegroom 'as if to recompense him'. This recalls the statement of one informant of Pālakkara, who said he had heard a rumour that in ancient days, the Asān of the village had the right to deflower retainer-Nayar women, a right which he might forgo on payment of a sum of money.[1]

588 824 831 [842] [788] The *tāli* is, as Thurston & Rangachari observe, shaped like a leaf of the *Ficus religiosa* (pipal) tree (*aswatha*). This tree is worshipped by Nayars, Nambūdiris, and Tamil Brahmans as an embodiment of the Sanskrit god Vishnu. It is said to symbolize male creative power, the female tree with which it is associated being the *veppu* or margosa (*Melia Azadirachta*).[2] In the Tamil country, the two trees are frequently planted together in a mock-marriage ceremony, so that the creeping stems of the margosa may twine round the pipal tree like the arms of a faithful wife round her husband. Among Nayars, Tiyyars, Nambūdiris, and Tamil Brahmans, barren women are counselled to march a hundred and eight times round the ficus tree to obtain children. We are therefore probably justified in regarding the *tāli* as a phallic symbol, presented to the bride as a sign 'that she may now do what she pleases'.[3]

588 Innes (1908, p. 174) and Krishna Menon (1894) reports that, traditionally, the bridegroom's party approached the house flourishing weapons and shouting a war-cry. Later, before tying the *tāli*, the bridegroom laid his sword across his lap, and the girl took an arrow
588 and a mirror in her hand. Mateer (1883) says that in Travancore, if the family were
184 too poor to perform the ceremonies, the girl's mother might tie her *tāli* before a sword or a clay idol representing Kāma Devan, the Hindu god of passion.[4] Similarly, since the tradi-
178 tional ceremony died out, many Pālakkara mothers take their immature daughters to some Brahmanical temple dedicated to Vishnu (the god of marital and domestic prosperity) and
776 themselves tie the *tāli* before the god.

588 [593] [613] Fawcett (1901, pp. 229–32) observes that the girl's brother carried her into the marriage hall from the house, bore her three times round it, and seated her to the left of the bridegroom; Innes (1908, p. 174) remarks that she might be carried there either by her brother or her *kāranavan*. On the fourth day, after their bath, the couple returned to the girl's ancestral house to find its doors shut against them. The bridegroom must force open the doors before he could take his seat with his bride in the kitchen where they ate a meal together. Alternatively, he might enter the house last in the procession, when boys of the girl's lineage pelted him with plantain fruits, which he must ward off with his shield.

[788] According to Innes (*ibid.* p. 173), before the rite the girl was secluded for three days and nights in an inner room of the house, with a brass hand-mirror in her right hand, an arrow in her left, and the eight auspicious objects before her. On the second morning she went to the bathing pool, on the bank of which she must, after bathing, jump thrice over a brass vessel of water with an unhusked coconut on top, overturning both at the third time.

588 613 564 184 833 I turn to the rite in the royal lineages. In the Cochin lineage, which prides itself on ancient, 'true' Kshattriya descent, the rite took the form of a Brahmanical marriage ceremony with Sanskrit *mantras* from the Grihya Sutras. It was performed separately for each girl before puberty by a Nambūdiri, who must actually deflower the girl on the night of the ceremonies. The bridegroom received a fee and departed after four days. The girl might then cohabit

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[1] Dr Aiyappan (1932) similarly reports that the Asān in some areas deflowered Nayar women at a ceremonial initiation.

[2] For a discussion of the symbolic significance of this tree see Dubois (1906, p. 652).

[3] My interpretation of the *tāli* as a phallic symbol is the more likely in that among Tamil Smartha Brahmans of Tanjore, the marriage *tāli* bears engraved upon it a *lingam*, the phallic emblem of Siva.

[4] This modern rite recalls the ceremonial marriage of the Devadasis (temple-dancers and prostitutes) in the Tamil country, in which the dedicated girl's *tāli* is tied by the temple priest before the god of the temple, or, if a girl fails to become dedicated to a god before puberty, by her mother in the presence of a sword. The 'marriage' is followed after puberty by the nuptials, at which a wealthy high caste man of the neighbourhood passes the night with the girl as the first of her lovers.

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with any Nambūdiri Brahman who had the consent of her *kāranavan*. Until recently, polyandry and divorce were said by my Nayar informants to have been even commoner than among Nayars.

In the Zamorin's and the Walluvanād lineages the *tāli* was tied by princes of the more ancient royal lineages of Kodungalur and Beypore. Actual defloration does not seem to have been obligatory in recent times. Kerr's (1811, ch 6) translation of Castaneda, however, states that

> . . . these sisters of the Zamorin, and other kings of Malabar, have handsome allowances to live upon; and, when any of them reaches the age of ten, their kindred send for a young man of the Nayar caste out of the kingdom, and give him presents to induce him to initiate the young virgin; after which he hangs a jewel around her neck, which she wears all the rest of her life as a token that she is now at liberty to dispose of herself to anyone she pleases as long as she lives.

Of the Zamorin's own marriage to a Nayar wife, Hamilton (1727, p. 172), a Scottish trader, wrote in 1723: 585 793

> When the Zamorin marries, he must not cohabit with his bride till the Nambourie or chief Priest has enjoyed her, and, if he pleases, may have Three Nights of her Company, because the first Fruits of her nuptials must be an holy Oblation to the God she worships; and some of the nobles are so complaisant as to allow the Clergy the same Tribute; but the common people cannot have that Compliment paid to them, but are forced to supply the Priest's place themselves.

Barbosa (Stanley, 1866, p. 124), writing in a more robust age, 1510, says of the Nayar commoners: 'And from that time forward [i.e. after the *tāli*-rite] the mother goes begging some young men to deflower the girl, for among themselves they hold it an unclean thing and almost a disgrace to deflower women.' 588 833

The immediate significance of the *tāli*-rite for Nayars of this area, taken in conjunction with their combined polyandry and polygyny, is clear. A Nayar *taravād* is perpetuated by its women. Hence the extraordinary value set by Nayars on obtaining a sufficiency of husbands and thus of children for their lineage. The *tāli*-rite dramatizes this need of the lineage for male sexual partners who ('like breeding bulls', as a Calicut prince remarked) will fulfil the one role denied to men of the lineage in respect of their sisters and nieces. The bridegroom's role as *enangan* was significant in a caste community in which sex relations were promiscuous. In this rite, through a chosen representative, the local caste group as a whole 'married' the lineage as a whole, and ritually set free the procreative powers of its girls to perpetuate their lineage. The ritual 'divorce' on the fourth day freed the girls from their particular bridegrooms, as the fee which accompanied it freed their lineage from further obligations to these men. If he wished to perpetuate the relationship, the ritual bridegroom must come again in a different role, without prior claims, merely as one of a series of lovers. The 'divorce' foreshadows the jealousy with which Nayar men regard the post-puberty lovers of their sisters: these are prevented from interfering in household matters, and may be dismissed by the brothers in a momentary fit of pique. The separation of the *tāli*-rite (the ritual marriage) from the later *sambandham* unions (initiated without rites) thus underlines the necessity to the lineage of husbands and fathers, while denying to the individual husband and father a legally and socially significant role in relation to his wife and children. 588 613 182 [586]

The tying of the *tāli*, in aristocratic lineages, by a Nambūdiri Brahman or other personage of higher caste in place of an *enangan*, fits in with the custom of hypergamous marriage. The higher caste bridegroom's role gives ceremonial recognition to the overlordship of *nāduvaris* over *desavaris*, of kings over *nāduvaris*, and in religious matters, of Nambūdiri Brahmans over all. The higher caste lover had no more rights in his mistress than the Nayar and even fewer obligations to her. At the same time the function in the political and economic systems of these high caste men's roles as ritual and physiological husbands and fathers to members of the castes below them must not be underestimated. Today the old political system has 588 564 [178]

588 collapsed and the old system of differential land-rights between Nambūdiris and rulers on
564 the one hand and their Nayar tenants on the other has been seriously undermined. Yet even
today Nayars remark with pride that their lineage has 'fathers' in the lineages of their former
178 landlords and chiefs, while chiefs and royalty alike revere their Nambūdiri *genitors*, and boast
that the blood of these Gods of the earth is running in their veins.

131 PART II. THE NAYAR *Tali*-RITE IN NORTH MALABAR

133 NORTH MALABAR LIES NORTH OF THE KORA RIVER, being the old kingdoms of Kolattiri,
Kurumbrattiri, and Kadattunad. Except for the coast-towns expanded by Europeans, it is
361 sparsely populated and mountainous; part of it is forest. Villages lie separated by hill ranges,
usually as clusters of houses on the hillsides surrounding small wet paddy-flats in the valleys.
[635] This contrasts with South Malabar and Cochin, where the coastal plain is wider, paddy-land
extensive, and settlement usually continuous between villages.

175 Perhaps because of its difficult environment, North Malabar did not before 1792 approach
the degree of political centralization achieved in the central area. The Kolattiri Rajas, it is
631 true, temporarily conquered Kottayam, Kurumbranad, and Kadattunad, but the area was
never consolidated as was the Zomorin's kingdom. Within the small kingdoms, *nāduvaris*
[628] fought each other and rebelled against their Rajas, allying themselves with different rulers
as suited their needs of the moment. Neighbouring *desavaris* sometimes fought each other within
[627] the *nād*, while within the *desam*, *kudipaga* (lineage-feud) persisted till modern times.

Consistent with this lack of political centralization, high-class Nayars were not divided
564 into sub-castes with administrative and occupational functions. Instead they had exogamous
clans, dispersed between many villages. In Kottayam and Kolattunad the bulk of Nayars
631 were Nambiars, independent land-owners owing only nominal allegiance to a chief. *Desavaris*,
613 appointed by the Raja or the *nāduvari*, had administrative powers in their villages but belonged
to the same sub-caste as other Nambiars. In most villages the land was divided between the
423 Nayar property-groups as owners, Nayar tenancies being less common than in the south.
[614] *Nāduvari* lineages, however, usually owned the land in the whole village where they lived,
employed Nambiar tenants as retainers, and claimed superior caste-rank, calling themselves
Samantan Nambiars. Nambūdiri Brahmans are fewer in the north than in the south, especially since the Muslim invasions from Mysore in the 1760s, when many fled to Travancore.
Those who remain live as landlords in widely separated villages, with local Nambiar lineages
as retainers. The Nayar servant castes are spatially distributed as in the south. The lower
polluting castes of manual workers are present in similar proportions, but Tiyyars and their
washermen and barbers are matrilineal in North Malabar, patrilineal in the south.

613 *The Nayar Kinship System.* North Malabar Nayars, though trained in arms in the private
[701] gymnasia of their lineages, were not recruited as a permanent militia of the kingdom. Instead
they cultivated their own lands with the aid of Tiyyar tenants, the serf castes being absent over
[566] most of the area. It seems largely because of this difference of occupation, North Malabar
Nayars are virilocal: a wife moves on marriage to the ancestral house of her husband, and
591 remains with him with rare exceptions till his death. Her children are brought up by their
father and commonly return to their own lineage at puberty. A boy then begins to manage
613 his *taravād* property under the direction of his *kāranavan*, while a girl is shortly afterwards
594 married, from the lineage house, by common consent of her *kāranavan* and her father, often to
[582] the *kāranavan*'s son or to a maternal nephew of the father.

Divorce is permitted, but is rarer than in the south. Polygyny is rare, polyandry even
586 traditionally forbidden. A cuckolded husband formerly cut off the hair of his wife and returned
595 her to her lineage. The *genitor* has customary rights in and obligations to his children. In
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Nayar

594 In addition to maintaining his wife he is expected but not strictly obliged to maintain his children 613 till puberty, though both wife and children may claim maintenance from their lineage as 851 well. Paternal kin are known and accorded kinship terms within a range of three to five generations. Marriage is prohibited between the children of brothers. 601 The *enangar* relationship formerly existed between lineages of the same local group: individual *enangar* represented the 582 group to the lineage at funerals and kept watch over its observance of caste laws. In most rites, however, patrilateral kin and affines filled the the roles filled by *enangar* in South Malabar. 613

The post-puberty *sambandham* is initiated with ceremonies and feasting, the central rite 585 being the handing of a loin-cloth by the man to the woman in the presence of his age-mates and her kin. After consummation in the bride's house, the couple go to the husband's house 851 where they are ceremonially received by elders. Children must be born in the mother's ancestral house, but paternal kin assert their claims in rites shortly after the birth. Physiological paternity is, of course, seldom in doubt, and sibling-groups refer to themselves proudly as 'the children of such-and-such' [their father's] lineage', for whose members they commonly exhibit greater affection, though less loyalty, than they do for matrilineal kinsmen.

588 *The Nayar* Tāli-*Rite.* Though the North Malabar *sambandham* was a 'real' marriage, the pre-puberty *tāli* rite was conducted as in the south. Unfortunately, I lack details of this rite either from the literature or from informants. Among Nambiars of Kottayam the ceremonies lasted four days and were conducted in a marriage shed, the areca-palm corner-post and the branch of the milk-tree being planted ceremonially as in the south. A temple-servant woman drew a chalk pattern to represent Bhagavadi and made offerings of rice, paddy, and coconuts [564] before it. Before the *tāli* was tied on the first day, men of the temple drummers' caste of Marars,[1] who here rank below Nayars and at their funerals direct offerings to the spirit, placed gold [301] bangles on the upper arms of the 'brides' and addressed them for the first time as *amma* ('mother', or 'married lady'). After the rite, the Marars received the bangles as payment. At a sign from the astrologer, a Nambūdiri Brahman tied the *tāli* for each girl. The couples were secluded for three days and the 'marriage' ended with a ceremonial bath on the fourth day. [851] Unless (as was rare in this area) the Nambūdiri wished to visit the girl as her regular husband after puberty, he might not cohabit with her again. The *tāli*-tier was not called *appan* by the [765] children, nor was he regarded as their ritual father. Children even traditionally observed death pollution not for this ritual bridegroom of the mother but for the *genitor*, at whose [783] funeral rites they played a part only second in importance to the deceased's younger brothers and sisters' children. Informants did not think that the 'bride' observed pollution for her *tāli*-tier's death; she did, however, traditionally observe pollution for her *sambandham* husband unless divorced before his death.

588 In Samantan Nambiar *nāduvari* lineages, as among Nambiars, the *tāli* was tied by a 613 Nambūdiri. *Sambandham* unions sometimes took place between *nāduvari* lineages of equal rank; more commonly, as in the south, *nāduvari* men married Nambiar women and Samantan Nambiar women married royal or Nambūdiri men. In the ancient Kshattriya lineages of Kottayam and Kurumbranad the *tāli* was tied by a Nambūdiri, and women of these lineages later had Nambūdiris as husbands, the princes marrying 'down' with women of chiefly or [564] village headmen's lineages. The Kolattiri lineage, which is less ancient and not acknowledged to be 'truly' Kshattriya, is said to have been a branch of the Travancore royal lineage which moved its site long ago. Kolattiri women had the *tāli* tied by men of a caste called Koil Tamburans, ancient Kshattriya families of Travancore who had been conquered by the Travancore Maharajas, and some of whom were brought to North Malabar by the Kolattiri

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[1] In South Malabar Marars are a temple-servant caste of drummers ranking slightly above Nayars. Nayar funeral rites are conducted by the lower Nayar sub-caste of Attikurssis (Chidigans in Cochin). In North Malabar, Marars rank below Nayars, and conduct Nayar funeral rites, there being no separate subcaste of funeral priests in the north.

Nayar
Tiyyar

588 Rajas to assist at their ceremonies. Kolattiri women married Koil Tamburan or Nambūdiri
men, and Kolattiri men Samantan Nambiar or Nambiar women. In the Kadattunad lineage,
613 which once owed fealty to Kolattiri as an ordinary chiefly lineage, the *tāli* was tied by Kolattiri
564 princes. Women of the lineage married Kolattiri or Nambūdiri men, and men, chiefly women
[582] of or village headmen's lineages of their kingdoms.

It is clear that, at least for the 'ordinary' Nambiars who married almost exclusively with
each other, the *tāli*-rite was no more than an initiation ceremony giving the girl the status
58 of a married woman. It is fitting that the *tāli* should not be tied by an *enangan*, for, polyandry
564 being prohibited, the girls of a lineage were not married collectively to the local group as a
whole. Since the *sambandham* union was permanent, the husband's sexual rights exclusive, and
182 the father accorded legal, ritual, and social rights, it is difficult to explain this rite in terms of social function. It is true, of course, that like all Nayar rites it had the function of identifying the Nayars as a group with customs distinctive from those of other groups. It may also be possible to argue that it gave ritual recognition to the overlordship of Nambūdiris. It was not, however, as in South Malabar, closely in keeping with the political and economic systems, either in the kingdom or the village. Nambūdiri landlords were few, and many Nayars would have to call for the rite Nambūdiris of distant villages to whom they had no relationship as retainers.

Similarly, the *tāli*-rite in the Kolattiri lineage seems to have resulted less from the lineage's
613 bond to the Koil Tamburans, than the reverse: for, if we are to believe informants, the Koil
588 Tamburans were brought from Travancore expressly to perform the *tāli*-rite and assist at
other ceremonies of the Kolattiri lineage. I am not prepared to state that the North Malabar
182 *tāli*-rite had no other social function, since I never saw it and the evidence is incomplete. It seems, however, that certain aspects of the rite, both in north and south, cannot be explained in terms of social function but only in terms of psychological motivations. This I defer until I have discussed the place of this rite in the kinship systems of North and South Malabar Tiyyars.

427 PART III. THE TIYYAR KINSHIP SYSTEM AND *TĀLI*-RITE IN NORTH MALABAR

621 THE TIYYARS FARM LAND leased on short-term tenures from Nayars and live in the low-caste
quarters of the same villages. In this area they are matrilineal. Like Nayars, they were organized
613 into *taras*, the hereditary headman (Tandan) of the *tara* being responsible to the *desavari* for
the administration of caste law among Tiyyars and the lower castes.[1]

Each *tara* might contain ten to twelve Tiyyar lineages and one each of Tiyyar washer-
613 men (Vannāns, called Mannāns in the south) and barbers (Kāvutiyyans, called Vātthis in
[621] the south). The Tiyyar lineage, like the Nayar, is exogamous, is united by birth and death
pollutions, the worship of a lineage goddess, and snake-worship, and is divided into property-
[564] groups each containing a sibling group together with the children and maternal grand-
children of the sisters. The Tiyyars, like the Nayars, have dispersed matrilineal exogamous
[614] clans. In this area (but not in South Malabar) Tiyyar men may hypergamously marry women
of the Tiyyar barber (but not the washerman) caste.

[582] Tiyyars, like Nayars, are predominantly virilocal. Unlike Nayars, Tiyyar men, having
little ancestral property, may remain with the father and build a house on land leased from
[591] Nayars near the father's dwelling-group. Though filiation is officially matrilineal, and children
[427] retain rights in any land or houses their matrilineal group may own, the *local* descent-group,
persisting over three to four generations, is therefore often patrilineal. Polyandry is forbidden,

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[423] [1] I have no information on the *mangar* institution of North Malabar Tiyyars. Dr Aiyappan's (1944, *passim*) discussion
of the Tiyyar *mangar* system seems, from my knowledge of Tiyyars, to apply only to patrilineal Tiyyars of South Malabar.
000 In Kottayam informants did not remember the institution which, if it existed, must have died out thirty to fifty years ago

Tiyyar

[North Malabar]

Polyandry is forbidden??

polygyny more common than among Nayars. Symmetrical cross-cousin marriage is encouraged, 595
the mother's brother's son being the rightful husband of a girl. Divorce, however, 582
appears to be much more common than among Nayars and the domestic group less stable,
especially in poor families. 586

For the post-puberty marriage ceremony the bridegroom comes with his parents and
elders to the house of the bride. This contrasts with Nayar marriage, where the youth is 585
accompanied by age-mates, the father and maternal uncles being prohibited from attending. 581
This difference reflects the fact that despite virilocal residence and the comparative infrequency
of divorce, North Malabar Nayar marriage is theoretically, as in the south, a contract between
individuals as sexual partners and not between lineages. Moreover, the absence of the maternal
uncles reflects the sexual jealousy between proximal generations in a Nayar lineage. Among
Tiyyars, marriage is primarily a contract between families, a domestic arrangement for
procuring food and bringing up children, as well as a sexual tie. The bridegroom's father [301]
and *kāranavan* jointly give gold to the goldsmith who makes earrings for the bride and places
them in the tops of her ears. These rings are the mark of a married woman and are removed [606]
at divorce or death.

The feast at the bride's house is paid for jointly by the two parties. After it is over, the 585
bridegroom's *kāranavan* pays a bride-price in *panams* (old-fashioned Malayali coins) to the
kāranavan of the bride. This sum is called *kānam*, the word used for the sum paid by a Nayar or 583
Tiyyar tenant to his landlord at the start of a period of tenure, nowadays fixed at twelve [613]
years. The interest on the *kānam* sum is then set off against the annual rent, and returned to
the tenant if the property is returned at the end of the stipulated period. The Tiyyar marriage [427]
is thus, as Aiyappan (1944, p. 91) says, 'in theory a temporary depositing of a girl by her [581]
natural guardian amidst another group from whom a security is received and also an undertaking
to take care of her'. The bride's party in return pay a dowry of jewellery and vessels.
The bridegroom presents one loin-cloth to the bride and another to her mother. The couple
are blessed by elders and depart to the bridegroom's house.

The Tiyyar marriage, therefore, is better defined legally than the Nayar. The *kānam* sum (which is of nominal value, in Kottayam fixed at 13½ *panams* or 3 to 5 rupees[1] and paid in the old coins long after their use as currency died out) is, it seems, a symbolic purchase of the husband's *ius in uxorem*. While this persists, he must maintain his wife. Should he lose it by the wife's adultery, his *kānam* sum is returned and his wife goes home with her dowry. In theory, he does not acquire *ius in genitricem* in his wife: this, as in all matrilineal societies, remains with her natal kin. Similarly, the father need not by law maintain his children, though he often does so in fact. These may at any time be returned to their *kāranavan*.

The Tiyyar Tāli-*Rite*. Since the Tiyyar *tāli*-rite died out about twenty years ago, it has 588
been better described in previous literature than by my own informants. I therefore summarize [178]
Anantha Krishna Iyer's (1909–12, I, p. 288), Thurston & Rangachari's (1909, VII, pp. 77–9)
and Aiyappan's (1944, pp. 159–62) accounts, and then add that of my informants. [127]

The rite must be performed before puberty, on pain of disgrace to the girl's family, and,
in ancient times, excommunication from caste. The day was fixed by the astrologer and the
ceremony held in the girl's matrilineal ancestral house. The girl was taken to the middle
room of the house and secluded for three days as if she had menstruated. Like a menstruous [841]
woman, she must abstain from meat and condiments and must not see a tree, a plant, a man,
a crow, a dog, or a cat. On the fourth day she bathed in the local pool. At the pool, her brother
planted an arrow with its point up, to drive away evil spirits. After bathing, the girl cut a

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[1] Thurston & Rangachari report that the north Malabar *kānam* sum is 41 *panams*; Aiyappan, however, places it between 8 and 29 *panams*. In Kottayam the bridegroom's mother's brother gives 11½ *panams* to the bride's mother's brother and 2 *panams* to her mother's brother's wife.

Tiyyar

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likeliest if his lineage is wealthier than his father, his parents divorced or his *kāranavan* sonless. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage is likeliest if the father has no personal property to leave to his son, if the father has no nephews, or if the husband has quarrelled with his *kāranavan*.

The cross-cousin's claim to become a girl's husband, seen in the *tāli*-rite, must be met at the later marriage ceremony if the girl marries some other man. As the couple leave the house, the girl's cross-cousin steps forward in mock attack, formerly with a sword. He is bought off by the bridegroom with a nominal fee and the couple then pass unmolested.

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The tying of the *tāli* by a potential mother-in-law foreshadows the later role of the wife as a subordinate who performs menial tasks under her guidance. Nayar women in North Malabar, too, do housework under the mother-in-law's supervision and customarily behave submissively to her. But their work is not obligatory, and a Nayar wife may decide to live for long periods in her *taravād* and receive her husband there; unless she denies him sexual rights this will not be seen as adequate grounds for divorce. Though the system is nominally matrilineal, a Tiyyar wife lacks this privilege. At marriage, the payments of dowry and earnest money transfer the rights in her domestic services to her husband's group and place on them the burden of her maintenance. Her desertion would therefore be grounds for divorce by the husband.

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In my Kottayam village the barber woman, as well as conducting the 'cooking' rites, tied the *tāli* herself. Informants stated that the *ammāyi* (mother's brother's wife, or prospective mother-in-law) must be present; they knew, moreover, that in some areas she tied the *tāli*. They were unable to explain this difference of custom. Among Tiyyar washermen and barbers themselves, the *tāli* was tied by an old man of the caste not previously related to the girl.

The North Malabar Tiyyar woman's *tāli* may therefore be tied by her prospective mother-in-law, by a woman of a lower, polluting caste or (among barbers and washermen) by a respected elder of the community. It is difficult to find a sociological explanation of why these three persons should be regarded as comparable, i.e. capable of fulfilling the role of initiating girls into womanhood. In the case of the mother-in-law, we have seen that other facts about Tiyyar kinship to some extent explain the form of the rite. Even here, however, it is difficult to explain why it is necessary at all. To what end must a girl observe mock menstrual seclusion before she has menstruated? To what end must she go through a form of marriage, carried out by her prospective mother-in-law, a barber woman, or an elderly man, before she is of age to marry? I revert to these questions after describing the Tiyyar ceremony in South Malabar and Cochin.

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PART IV. THE TIYYAR KINSHIP SYSTEM AND *Tāli*-RITE IN SOUTH MALABAR AND COCHIN

HERE, AS IN THE NORTH, Tiyyars rank below Nayars as the highest 'polluting' caste and are tenant-farmers and coconut-growers. But in this area they have, like the other lower castes above serfs, localized, named patrilineal lineages comparable in size and distribution with the matrilineal lineages of the north. The lineage is exogamous; it has a depth of about five to seven generations; is united by the observance of pollutions, by the worship of patrilineal ancestors, of a lineage-god and of snakes, and is sometimes subdivided into property-groups three to five generations deep. The lineage, like the North Malabar Tiyyar and the Nayar matrilineage, is called a *taravād*.

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The internal organization of the local caste group of the *tara* was similar to North Malabar, with a hereditary headman (Tandan) whose powers derived from the *desavari*. The *enangar* relationship was remembered by my informants, though it began to die out about twenty years ago. Each lineage had a single *enangar* lineage through which it was linked to the group. *Enangar* obligations were reciprocal and exclusive. Tiyyar *enangar*, moreover, unlike Nayar,

Tiyyar

[South Malabar and Cochin]

● 613 must be unrelated: if a man married an *enangar* woman, the *enangar* bond was broken and
each lineage must find new, unrelated *enangar*. *Enangar* must be present to witness marriages,
[769] to help at funerals, and to represent their lineage's ancestral spirits in the ceremonial food-
offerings to spirits on the sixteenth day after, or the anniversary of, a death. The prohibition
[765] on marriages between *enangar* acts as an insurance that the *enangar* should not be prejudiced
by ties of matrilaterial or affinal kinship in their task of bringing to justice members of the
linked lineage who offended against caste law. Among Nayars, this was less likely to happen
because patrilateral ties were less strong than are matrilaterial ties among Tiyyars.

614 Cutting across their lineage-grouping, the Tiyyars had dispersed, exogamous matri-
lineal clans, comparable with the clans of the north. My informants knew nothing about these
613 clans except that they were once exogamous. They are not so today, since some people do
not remember their clan-names. Though the clans have died out, marriage is prohibited
582 between known matrilineal kin.

The Tiyyars of this area had fraternal polyandry. In this they must be distinguished
595 from the Nayars, since the Tiyyars banned non-fraternal polyandry, while the Nayars of
Malabar and Cochin forbade the marriage of one woman to two men of the same lineage,
585 not to mention the same sibling-group. Tiyyar fraternal polyandry died out about twenty
years ago. To carry out this marriage, the horoscopes of the girl and the eldest potential
husband were compared and the amount of the dowry of jewels and vessels fixed. The bride-
grooms went to the girl's house with their kin and *enangar*. Their mother's brother handed
clothing for the bride, together with the *kānam* sum as in Norther Malabar, to the mother's
[533] brother of the bride. A learned man sang a marriage formula to the effect that the girl of such
a lineage was here given to the men of such a lineage, with caste-men and the sacred lamp as
witness. He adjured the bridegroom's party to punish her reasonably when necessary, but to
'Keep her well, but if you are displeased with her, bring her back to us even if she has ten
children, and we shall have her back, after settling the accounts in the presence of the third
man [the go-between in marriage arrangements] and the *enangan*.' The bride was seated
in the marriage hall at the end of a row beside her bridegrooms. The bridegroom's mother
and other kinsfolk, and finally their *enangan* and his wife, fed the grooms and then the bride
with porridge and with coconut-milk.

The marriage was consummated shortly afterwards in the bride's house, where each
[606] husband in order of age went to live with her for one or two weeks. At the end of the honey-
moon period she was brought permanently to the husband's house, where she became her
mother-in-law's subordinate. The husbands cohabited with her for equal periods in turn by
the arrangement of their mother. Even a child might be married to the common wife by the
595 milk-tie, and when he grew up claim conjugal rights in his much older wife. If the family were
large and the wife weak in health, a second and even a third woman might, at least in modern
[601] times, be married by all the brothers and shared as their common wife. Children called all the
fathers *appan*, prefacing distinguishing terms. Sons had equal rights of inheritance. The system
[428] mitigated against division of property, but, at least in modern times, if the family became large,
brothers might, on the death ~~of their~~ fathers, divide the property and the children and each
take one of the wives to live with him in middle life.

586 Divorce is permitted: a divorced wife returns to her brother's house, whence she may
in theory be remarried. To effect a divorce, the eldest husband traditionally took a piece of
thread from his loin-cloth, burnt it in two, and blew the two pieces away, saying to the brother
of the girl, 'Here is your sister's *āchāram*.' *Āchāram* commonly means 'custom', and Aiyappan
(1944, p. 184), interprets the phrase, 'Hereby the "thread-tie" [formed by presenting a loin-
cloth to the wife at marriage] is snapped, and with it my customary rights over this woman
as her husband terminate.' The earnest money was returned to the husband's kin in the

Tiyyar

[South Malabar and Cochin]

presence of *enangar*. The young children of a divorced woman might return with her to her 586
brother's house, but had the right to go back before puberty to their fathers' house.

In this system the husbands obtain both sexual and procreative rights in their wife, her 595
children becoming members of their patrilineal group. The wife herself does not, however, as
among Brahmans, become wholly incorporated as a member of her husband's lineage. A 613
sonless widow whose husband left no brothers had no rights to property or maintenance by 851
his family; she must return to her brother's house. She could not, as among Brahmans, adopt
on behalf of her husband or temporarily manage his property in the absence of adult kinsmen. [589]
Though her children belong to the husband's group, the wife appears as in North Malabar
to be only temporarily 'leased' by the husbands, on payments of the *kānam* sum, for her sexual [581]
and domestic services.

Moreover, though a woman cannot inherit property in her natal *taravād*, the bond 593
between brother and sister remains strong. The eldest brother is early regarded as the guardian 613
of his sisters, who observe partial avoidance and respect to him much as in a Nayar *taravād*.
It is significant that at divorce, a woman is returned to her brother, not to her father or the 428
headman of her patrilineal group. At the death of a married woman, her brothers and their 586
children observe pollution in their own dwelling-group, assembling at the deceased's conjugal
house on the sixteenth day for final rites to the spirit. At the death of a man, his sisters' sons 593
have pollution, assemble at his house, and in the sixteen days of mourning perform offerings
to the spirit immediately after the deceased's sons, and before his younger brothers and 765
paternal grandchildren. At the death of a man, his sisters and daughters make offerings to
an image of the deceased on the fourteenth day, but the widow herself (unlike the Brahman [782]
widow) takes no part in death rites. This shows the strong tie persisting between a married 593
woman and her natal group, and the comparative lack of integration into the group of the
women who marry its men. The former existence of exogamous matrilineal clans underlines
this persistence of the bond between women and their natal kinsfolk, especially their brothers.[1]

The Tiyyar Tāli-*Rite*. A girl's *tāli* was tied before puberty by a boy, usually a small child, 588
of some local *taravād*, affinal or unrelated, into which the girl might marry. My informants
in Cochin and Walluvanād could not remember the details of the rite, which has died out
in the last twenty years. They knew that it must be done before puberty, and that the *tāli*-tier sometimes married the girl after puberty by the usual ceremonies.

According to Thurston & Rangachari (1909, VII, pp. 80–1), who describe the rite in [787]
Chavakkad, between Calicut and Cochin, Anantha Krishna Iyer (1909–12, I, pp. 285–7) who describes it for Cochin, and Aiyappan (1944, pp. 159–60) for the whole central area,
the horoscopes were compared as for a marriage. The artisans provided an arrow and a
brass mirror which the girl carried in her hand, a plank of the milk-tree, the rouge-bottle [564]
which figures in the eight auspicious objects, and a staff carried by the bridegroom. The
local *Pānan* (a low caste of sorcerers and menial workers) brought a peacock-feather umbrella
for the girl and a 'war umbrella' for the boy. A week in advance, the carpenter planted the
south-east corner-post of the shed at an auspicious moment. For three days before the rites,
the girl was secluded as if she had menstruated. On the day before the rites, she was taken to
worship the sun, and was seated in the marriage-hall on a plank with a lit lamp, a vessel of
water, rice, plantain-fruits, and a coconut before her. Her mother's brother's wife parted her
hair and placed a gold coin on her crown, and the Tandan's wife (like the barber in North
Malabar) anointed this three times with oil, here poured from a leaf of the *jak* tree. The girl
took a ceremonial bath and was secluded in the house with a casket, a bell-metal mirror, and
a sword on a stool beside her. [587]

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[1] The tie between sisters is also close. They and their children observe pollution for each others' deaths, and the sororate (forbidden among Nayars and North Malabar Tiyyars) sometimes confirms the status of the mother's sister as a proxy mother.

588 On the day fixed the couple dressed in cloths given by the girl's father, and the girl was
led into the hall by her mother's brother and seated on the plank. The boy was carried in
on the shoulders of his mother's brother, borne thrice round and seated to the right of her,
her own mother's brother's wife sitting on her left. The girl's father three times asked the
astrologer if the auspicious moment had come, after which the bridegroom tied the *tāli*.
Aiyappan states that the boy placed the *tāli* round the girl's neck, where it was tied behind by
her mother or her father's sister. Iyer reports that in Cochin, the boy stood behind the girl
and tied it himself. The couple were given a sweet drink as at a normal marriage. The girl
was then secluded for three days with the new loin-cloth which the boy had worn kept always
beside her. On the fourth morning, the couple bathed together and were taken to worship
[184] at the temple. In South Malabar, though not in Cochin, the loin-cloth was then taken from
[586] the girl's room and cut in two, as at the divorce in a Nayar rite. The bridegroom then took
a thread of it and, as at a normal divorce, snapped it saying to the girl's brother, 'Here is your
[613] sister's *āchāram*.' He departed taking the two pieces of cloth and a few rupees paid by the girl's
family. As among Nayars, a whole *taravād* might hold the ceremonies for all its immature girls,
separate bridegrooms then being required for each.

184 This ceremony, more clearly than the North Malabar Tiyyar one, is a mock-marriage
of the girl to a vicarious husband. It would be less appropriate for the mother's brother's
588 wife or the father's sister to tie the *tāli* in this group, since cross-cousin marriage, though
[592] preferential, is not enjoined to the extent which it is in the north. Even so, the mother's brother's
wife, perhaps as potential mother-in-law, performs preliminary rites. On the face of things,
however, it seems extraordinary that in this group where the marriage bond is strong, father-
hood known within a group of brothers, inheritance patrilineal, and the wife at least partly
incorporated into the lineage of her husband, such a rite should be performed at all. It is
significant that the Tiyyar *tāli*-tier does not take over the role of ritual father to the woman's
children by her later husbands, nor does he in any sense remain a husband to the woman.
[765] Unless she is married to him after puberty, neither the girl nor her children observe pollution
for his death nor use kinship terms for him. This difference between South Malabar Tiyyars
[601] and Nayars befits the difference between Nayar matriliny with its denial of the social aspect
of physiological paternity, and the Tiyyar patrilineal lineage system with its emphasis on the
[613] legitimacy of children. But why did the Tiyyars perform the rite at all? Since they themselves
have no answer to this question, except that it was part of ancient custom, we are driven to
look for an explanation in terms of unconscious motivations.

PART V. INTERPRETATION OF THE *Tāli*-RITE

184 THE CEREMONIES VARY IN DETAIL but have certain features in common (see Chart I). The
588 rite must in all cases be performed before puberty, and is always a symbolic defloration.
831 This is most clear in the royal lineages, where the bridegroom actually deflowers the girl.
Among South Malabar Nayars, the aggressive approach of the bridegroom's party suggests
a sexual attack, as does the action of the bridegroom who places his sword across his lap
before tying the *tāli* on the bride. When, on the fourth morning, the bridegrooms force open
the shut doors of the girls' lineage house, it is clear that they are, as strangers, making an
aggressive entry into the *taravād*, i.e. symbolically deflowering its women.

In all the ceremonies other ritual acts make it clear that the rite is a symbolic defloration.
The lit wick, arrow, sword, coconut tree, staff, sun, sky, peacock-feathers, the corner-post of
the marriage-shed and the bamboo rod stuck in a coconut are readily recognized as phallic
symbols recurrent in South Indian ritual; while paddy, rice, coconut inflorescence, rouge-
bottle, bell-metal mirror (worshipped in temples as symbol of Bhagavadi), mud pot of water,

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Tiyyar

000 sexual jealousy of the natal kinsmen (projected on to spirits, gods, and ancestors) aroused by a
[262] woman's marital sexuality. The prohibitions on eating meat and condiments are those
stipulated for both men and women in all periods of pollution and also in periods of abstention
[783] to obtain ritual purity before worshipping a god. Since these foods are believed to induce sexual
desire, this prohibition is equated by informants with abstention from sexual intercourse
[834] (also enjoined in all periods of pollution or of enhanced ritual purity) and thus is comparable
here to the prohibition on seeing a man or other male sexual symbol and of refraining from
marital intercourse.

The practice of a girl's arming herself with a knife or an arrow during menstruation may signify an unconscious desire on the part of women to appropriate and arm themselves with the penis of the prohibited parent, or with any phallic symbol, and thus obviate the dreaded incestuous attack. Since the dread is also unconsciously a desire, this hypothesis is not incompatible with the other, that the knife and arrow are phallic symbols (perhaps paternal) with which the girl, by keeping them beside her, symbolically cohabits in the seclusion period.

On the side of men, the planting of an arrow by the girl's brother near the bathing pool after her first menstruation may be a sign of the brother's unconscious desire to copulate with his sister, or to drive away unwanted parental figures (the mother's brother or the father) whose sexual attack the girl both dreads and unconsciously desires. The same incestuous desire on the part of the brother appears in a South Malabar Nayar rite at the first menstruation, where the brother breaks a sheath containing coconut buds with his knife and counts the buds which roll out as an augur of the number of children his sister will bear.

It seems probable that in general the menstruous woman is unconsciously equated by a man with his mother as a forbidden sexual object; hence the fear of approaching her, based on unconscious fear of castration by the father. This view finds support in the beliefs that a man becomes impotent if he copulates with a menstruous woman, and that, by extension, trees and plants wither and die if she urinates or walks upon them. As is well known, the fear of impotence frequently indicates an unconscious fear of being castrated by the father for a sexual approach to the mother. The particular fear of the menstruous woman may lead back to an infantile belief, common in our own society, that parental intercourse is a sadistic attack by the father in which the mother is wounded and bleeds. The fact that the menstruous woman is armed with a knife or an arrow recalls an allied phantasy common among European infants, of the phallic mother who by intercourse has possessed herself of the father's penis and is thus doubly terrifying since, if one approached her, the penis would attack (castrate) oneself. (Klein 1932, pp. 103, 189-90.)

Why is it deemed necessary for a girl to 'menstruate' and be deflowered (both symbolically) before she has attained puberty and is likely to enter into real sex relations? The first part of my hypothesis is that this rite issues out of the marked horror of incest in these castes, which makes it necessary for the natal kinsmen of a woman to renounce the rights in her mature sexuality before she is in fact mature.

184 Among the Nayars and North Malabar Tiyyars descent is matrilineal and the *ius in*
genitricem of a woman remains with her matrilineage headed by her *kāranavan*. This man is
613 usually her mother's brother and later her own elder brother. In all these castes but particularly among South Malabar Nayars, a woman must implicitly obey these kinsmen,
564 sometimes to the extent of divorcing her husband of whom they are overtly jealous. The
horror with which these castes regard incest within the lineage, however, makes the etiquette
602 of behaviour between a woman and older men of her lineage formalized to the point of avoid-
ance. She may not sit before them, speak to them except under necessity, nor be alone with
[586] one of them. In the royal lineages a prince should not see his mature younger sisters and
maternal nieces except on ceremonial occasions.

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Tiyyar

This partial avoidance between a woman and her older natal kinsmen begins after the 613
tāli-rite, when she receives the title *amma* (lit. 'mother'). In the rite, it seems, the girl is fic- 602
titiously made mature by the mock menstrual seclusion – before she is in danger of actually
becoming mature; her sexuality is then given away by her natal kinsmen to a vicarious hus- 588
band outside her lineage. For this is the one right in her forbidden to her natal kinsmen;
the rest – her domestic services and procreative power – remain theirs throughout her life. 182
Even among North Malabar Nayars and Tiyyars, with their virilocal residence, the brother 184
may call home his sister and her children and require her to divorce her husband. He must,
moreover, maintain her if she is divorced, and her children have the right to return to the
mother's brother's house as his heirs.

The unconscious desire for adelphic incest in these matrilineal castes appears in other 182
rites. I have mentioned the rites performed by the brother of a girl at her first menstruation
among South Malabar Nayars and North Malabar Tiyyars. Later, when the South Malabar 184
Nayar woman was in the fifth or seventh month of her pregnancy, she was formerly seated 593
before her brother who poured tamarind juice into her mouth from the point of the *taravād*'s 613
ancestral sword. It was believed that he thus conveyed strength (*sakthi*, a generalized form of
energy believed to reside *par excellence* in semen) and also martial valour, into the body of the 843
first-born child. This seems a clear instance of the brother's unconscious wish to impregnate [827]
his sister himself, as well as an explicit recognition that, in matriliny, the mother's brother has [822]
the rights of a *pater* in the child.

Among South Malabar Tiyyars the tamarind-juice is given by the pregnant woman's
brother to her husband, and by the husband's sister to his wife. This rite is more in keeping [607]
with a patrilineal system in which the husband has primary procreative rights in his wife. At
the same time, it seems likely that the rite reflects the brother's unconscious desire to pass his
'strength' to his sister and her child, through the husband, and the sister's desire to contribute
to the making of the child, and thus usurp the role of her brother's wife. The rite is beautifully
in keeping with double unilineal descent, in which brothers and sisters retain strong interest
and rights in each others' offspring.

The unconscious fear, and underlying it, an unconscious desire, of women for sexual attack 184
from a male parental figure (the father in this case) probably appears also in the South Malabar
Tiyyar rites which precede the tamarind-drinking. These are to drive out evil spirits who may 843
attack the child in the womb. The woman sits at night before a group of washermen (Mannans) 789
who invoke the spirit in song, and perform devil-dancing in weird masks. By morning, the more
susceptible of the women present, overcome by the spirit, may go into fits. Finally a live cock 182
is held against the woman's forehead, and rice thrown over her head. If she has a fit, the
cock is beheaded and its blood offered to the evil spirit. The rites are paid for by the woman's [564]
father. In view of what is known of the beliefs concerning incubi in western societies (Jones [787]
1931, ch. 3), it seems probable that these rites issue from the unconscious female fear of being
attacked sexually by the father, and the recognition of the father's unconscious desire to kill [782]
the child in his daughter's womb. The Mannan devil-dancers (who sometimes consciously
impersonate the dead ancestors of a propitiating Tiyyar lineage) may be interpreted to represent the woman's lineage forbears and thus, collectively, her father.[1]

Again, in all the groups studied the *taravād* is believed to be guarded by a group of snake- 000

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[1] This interpretation is practically certain in view of the almost identical ceremony carried out one year after the death of a South Malabar Tiyyar. It is believed that before this the spirit is earth-bound and cannot be invoked to pass to heaven. On the night fixed, small girls of the *taravād* sit before Mannan and Panan devil-dancers who, as in the pregnancy ceremonies, wear weird masks and sing to invoke the spirit. Late at night one of the girls may become possessed by it and talk like the deceased, and give commands to the family about its future conduct. After this ceremony the spirit is freed from its bonds to the earth (see Thurston and Rangachari 1909, VII, p. 91). Since the possession of the girls by an ancestral spirit here is of the same kind as in the pregnancy rites and both types of spirit are called *pedham*, there seems little doubt that the evil spirit who attacks is also ancestral and thus an *imar*.

Nayar

613 Again in all the groups studied the

776 taravād is believed to be guarded by a group of snake-
564 gods (*nagas*) who reside in the small grove in the south-east corner of the ancestral gardens.
182 If they are offended, the snakes inflict the *taravād* with barrenness among women, disease, and
184 child-deaths. They are propitiated by the low caste of Pulluvar. A Pulluvar and his wife come to the Nayar or Tiyyar grove and draw figures of the serpents in green, red, yellow, and black. They sing songs of entreaty to the snakes, and play on a musical instrument, while one
782 or more women of the propitiating *taravād*, who have observed sexual continence and food taboos for several days previously, dance round the figures with hair streaming. The snakes
787 then 'enter the bodies' of these women, who behave in a dissociated manner and speak with the voice of the possessing snake-spirit, announcing to *taravād* members the kind of propitiation necessary to overcome their wrath. Since they are the guardians of the *taravād*, are jealous of the marital sexuality of women born into it, can inflict them with barrenness, and periodically 'enter into' them, it seems likely that these totemic snakes are unconsciously regarded as phallic symbols of the *taravād*'s male forbears (whether matrilineal or patrilineal). Their 'possession' of the women would thus reflect the incestuous desires of women towards men of the parental generation in the *taravād*, and secondarily towards their brothers.

593 I have discussed in general terms the probable existence of unconscious incestuous desires between the individual and members of the parental generation and, as an extension
182 of this, between siblings. We must now face the problem of whether, in the matrilineal castes, a regular Oedipus complex exists: that is, of whether a man unconsciously wishes to kill his father and appropriate his mother, and whether a girl harbours murderous wishes towards her mother and incestuous ones towards her father.[1]

There seems little doubt that in the matrilineal as in the patrilineal castes, a 'normal' Oedipus complex must develop in early infancy. Even among South Malabar Nayars the physiological function of the male in procreation is clearly acknowledged, and a child is expected to resemble its father as well as its matrilineal kin. The Nayar infant must, moreover, be aware of the marital relationship between its parents, since it commonly sleeps in the
593 mother's room until the age of about four or until the next sibling is born. At about the age of
604 five to six, however, a change takes place in the relationship between a South Malabar Nayar child and its parental generation, and thus, we may suppose, in its unconscious attitudes to
182 these figures. A boy now comes under the discipline of his mother's brothers, and a relationship of reverence with underlying hostility begins to be formed. A girl becomes aware that her mother's brothers are her ultimate guardians and, though she may still approach them freely, she must submit to them. The father drops into the background. In a traditional household, whereas he might play with them freely as babies, he may not now interfere in the upbringing of his children. Even today, he may be already divorced and replaced by another husband: in Palakkara sixteen out of seventy Nayar sibling groups containing children under
[578] the age of fifteen had no contact with the *genitor* or his kin. The mother's brother thus takes over a great part of the role of *pater*. The relationship admits, however, greater conscious hostility than does the patrilineal father-child relationship. Despite the reverence demanded in public, Nayar men sometimes remark privately that they harbour murderous feeling towards their *kāranavan*: several have in fact killed him. Such conscious hostility to the father would be almost unheard of in a high patrilineal caste. The partial avoidance required between a man and his sister's son, and the extreme formality of their behaviour, reflect this underlying hostility. The relationship with the elder brother is, in etiquette, modelled on that

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[114] [1] My data, as far as Malabar matriliny is concerned, contradict Malinowski's (1916) theory that the Oedipus complex is absent from the start in matrilineal societies and is replaced by the wish to marry the sister and kill the maternal uncle. They confirm Ernest Jones's (1924) conclusion that a normal Oedipus complex exists in matrilineal as in patrilineal societies, but that in matriliny repressed incestuous desire for the mother is extended to an unusual degree to the sister, and much unconscious hostility to the father deflected towards the mother's brother. Roheim's (1950, ch. 3) refutation of Malinowski's view and his analysis of the Oedipus complex of Normanby Island are also relevant.

Nayar
Tiyyar

184 The unconscious
182 hostility of the son to his fathers appears in beliefs about
the spirits of dead *kāranavans* of the patrilineal group, which, like Nayar *kāranavans'* spirits,
593 are predatory and dangerous beasts to be propitiated with fear. Hostility to the father is
however in his lifetime more deeply suppressed than to the Nayar mother's brother, as is
775 male sibling rivalry. Among Nayars, an attempt is made to mitigate the divergent interests
of married brothers by reducing to a minimum the claims of their wives and children. Their
595 mutual jealousy is also acknowledged in the prohibition against brothers having sex-relation
with the same woman. Among Tiyyars unity of marital interests is ensured by obliging brothers
to share a wife. This enforced unity of brothers is the most striking feature of the Tiyyar
system and that which contrasts most strongly with the matrilineal castes.

182 Also among Tiyyars the father-daughter relationship resembles that of the Nayar to his
sister's daughter. After she is five to six, a girl's father sternly disciplines her; with the onset
184 of puberty an etiquette of partial avoidance is imposed. The 'possession' of women by serpent-
gods of their natal *taravād*, and the exorcism of demons during pregnancy lead me to suspect
593 that unconscious incestuous wishes towards the father are perpetuated in women as they are
towards the mother's brothers (whose images are the serpent gods of the matrilineage) among
Nayars and matrilineal Tiyyars.

The Tiyyar system is not, however, a 'regular' patrilineal one. We may suspect this from
593 the existence of matrilineal clans. First, the father's power is not absolute: he shares it with
182 his brothers. Second, the harmony between brothers is, as among Nayars, maintained primarily
through their dependence on the mother. Among Nayars men neglect their wives and children
613 for the sake of *taravād* and mother. Among Tiyyars they forgo sexual satisfaction for the sake
of the mother and domestic harmony: the mother controls the wife's actions and dictates
184 the turns by which her sons may sleep with their common wife. This dependence on the
606 mother is reflected, as among Nayars, in devotion to Bhagavadi.

Third, the Tiyyar system resembles the Nayar in the strength of brother-sister ties.
The Tiyyar father early surrenders part of the guardianship of his daughters to his sons.
593 This appears at the *tāli*-rite where the father hands his daughter to the mock bridegroom,
182 who returns her at the 'divorce' to her brother. The relationship between a mature but un-
married girl and her brother is, as among Nayars, one of discipline, restraint and partial
184 avoidance. After her marriage and departure to the husband's house, the restraint between
a Tiyyar woman and her brother is somewhat relaxed. Should she be divorced or widowed,
however, she is returned to her brother.

The disciplinary role of the brother is reflected in the relationship to the mother's brother. He is not, as in many patrilineal systems, an intimate with whom joking and licence are permitted. He is rather a potential father-substitute, and may in fact become one if his sister is divorced or widowed. At his death his sisters' children observe pollution as for a patrilineal kinsmen and, after the deceased's sons but before his younger brothers, make offerings to the spirit. In life his claim as a potential father-in-law resembles that of the Nayar or Tiyyar mother's brother in North Malabar.

595 Fraternal polyandry strengthens the claims of maternal kin, as it does the ties between
a woman and her natal family. For in the traditional family, with a single common wife, there
182 is only one set of maternal kinsfolk for all the children of brothers. Even if a second wife were
taken, sororal polygyny or the sororate might perpetuate this situation. Again, it is clear
593 that with fraternal polyandry many Tiyyar women must have remained unmarried and under
the permanent guardianship of their brothers. The uncertain prospect of marriage for a
woman gives us a further clue to the meaning of the *tāli*-rite.

588 Having clarified the relationship of women to their natal kinsmen, we can state more
clearly the probable unconscious motives for the *tāli*-rite. In all the groups her natal kins-
593 men retained strong though varying rights in a woman throughout her life. In all, the bond
182

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Tiyyar

between mother and son was the most cherished relationship, while that between brother and 588
sister came second in emotional strength. In all the exogamy of the unilineal group was 593
sternly enjoined, and there was horror of adelphic incest. There was, however, evidently temptation
towards it, since women remained under the partial guardianship of their brothers and 182
might (invariably among South Malabar Nayars, occasionally in the other groups) live in
the same house with them.

It is a commonplace in Hinduism that a woman is never independent: throughout her life 593
she is under the guardianship of one or more men. At her birth all rights in a woman are vested
in the men of her property-group, among Nayars and Tiyyars the *kāranavan* and under him 562
other males of the group, whether matrilineal or patrilineal. These rights include the right to
discipline her and, as she becomes old enough, to command her domestic services; they are 613
counterbalanced by the obligation to feed her and protect her from harm. At puberty two
new sets of rights are acquired by whoever is her guardian, in her sexuality and in the children 182
she may bear. In the matrilineal castes the *ius in genitricem* is retained by the matrilineal kinsmen. 184
Among South Malabar Tiyyars it is given to a group of brothers of another patrilineal
lineage at the post-puberty marriage rite. In all these castes there is, however, uncertainty 588
about the *ius in uxorem*, since the girl is not, as in a patrilineal Tamil caste, given over to the
guardianship of one particular husband for the duration of her life. First, all the castes permit [586]
divorce and reversion to the brothers' house. Second, among Nayars, though a woman might
have several husbands traditionally, she might conceivably have none, if she was divorced
or failed to compete with other women. Among South Malabar Tiyyars, because of fraternal
polyandry, many women must have remained unmarried. The *tāli*-rite, therefore, appears in 588
one aspect as half a marriage, a ceremony made necessary by the strong incest-taboos in these 182
groups and the uncertain nature of post-puberty marriage. In it the men of her natal group
ceremonially give away the sexual rights in a girl. That the bridegroom does not receive
permanent rights in his bride, but forsakes her on the fourth morning, points up the negative
character of this marriage, as a renunciation of rights by the men of one group without the
corresponding acceptance of them by members of another.

In all the groups certain ritual acts emphasize this reluctant renunciation by the woman's 588
natal kinsmen. In the matrilineal castes one of her brothers, or her *kāranavan*, carries each girl
into the marriage shed, bears her round, and seats her on the plank. This act is significant 182
because after the *tāli*-rite a girl may not be touched by mature men of her lineage: taboos 184
associated with incest prohibitions come into force from this date. Among South Malabar
Tiyyars, again, the mother's brother, who after the father has secondary rights of guardianship 613
and who, through matrilineal clan exogamy, is also concerned in the etiquette of incest-taboos,
carries the girl to her seat. In the matrilineal castes, the girl's *kāranavan* asks the [835]
astrologer if the auspicious time has come, and signals for the *tāli* to be tied. Among South
Malabar Tiyyars, as might be expected, the father officiates here. Among South Malabar
Nayars, brothers of the girls first welcome the bridegrooms, wash their feet, and receive gifts
of clothing in return. The underlying sexual hostility of the lineage's men to these necessary
intruders appears on the fourth morning, when boys of the host lineage pelt the bridegrooms
with plantain-fruits (recognized as phallic symbols by Nayars) as they enter the house to eat
the ceremonial meal with their brides. Among Nayars and South Malabar Tiyyars, the
kāranavan's gifts to the bridegrooms when they depart after the 'divorce' signify his gratitude
for their act of ceremonially releasing the procreative powers of his lineage's women, while
at the same time dismissing them.

We note now that the *tāli* is seldom tied by the man with whom the girl will later cohabit as her husband. Among South Malabar Nayars the *enangan* might, after the 'divorce', approach her again as lover. But his status as ritual bridegroom gave him no prior claims: as the girl's

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Tiyyar

796 language women whom they meet. At the temple they are received by young Nayar girls who
sell to them a mixture of yellow turmeric powder, blessed by *mantras*, and receive in return a
831 volley of sexual abuse. Thousands of cocks are sacrificed in the temple yard by the pilgrims
as an offering to Bhagavadi who is believed to drink their blood. Hundreds of Nayar, Tiyyar,
78 and Mannan Bhagavadi oracles from all over Malabar prance wildly in the temple courtyard
in their red cloths and waist-bands of bells, madly chopping their foreheads till blood flows
copiously. In the evening, at a sign from the *adhikari* of Kodungalur, the chief of the Mukkuvans (a low fishing caste of the same culture as Tiyyars) begins the work of polluting the actual shrine by rushing up to it and beating the outer wall with his stick. According to Fawcett (1901 p. 245), he formally entered the shrine and defecated on the idol. The crowd of Nayar and low caste men then hurtle, shouting foul abuse, round the shrine, beat on its walls, and fling gold and filth into its interior. The festival ends at dusk when they return quietly home. The next day, the Bharani day itself, the temple is locked and deserted in fear, since it is believed that for seven days following, the foul demon attendants of the goddess are given over to depredations of the shrine and of the idol itself. On the seventh day, its priests reopen the temple, ritually purify it, and restore it to normal high caste worship again.[1]

796 This attack on the goddess by low caste men who may not normally approach her
831 represents, it seems likely, a sexual attack on the mother by son-figures to whom she is normally denied. In it the high caste priests (fathers) vacate the temple; the rules of purity and
78 pollution are reversed; animal sacrifice is indulged in; women and the goddess are insulted
in a manner contrary to everyday etiquette; and the Bhagavadi idol formally made the
182 object of an anal attack. The ceremony appears to act out cathartically the incestuous phantasies of Nayar and low caste men towards their mother, and incidentally, in their obscene
attack on the Nayar girls, the repressed desires of low caste men towards forbidden women
564 of the higher castes. I suggest that in the singing of obscene songs by the washermen at a
588 Nayar or Tiyyar puberty-ceremony, and the use of the barber as a kind of proxy bridegroom
at the North Malabar Tiyyar *tāli*-rite, these low caste men act out similar phantasies towards
881 higher-caste mother-figures, as well as providing the higher castes with harmless 'polluted'
bridegrooms who perform the necessary but dangerous tasks associated with bringing their
182 girls to womanhood.

831 Why should the Oedipal fear in these castes be so excessively strong that it is necessary
ceremonially to renounce the rights in the sexuality of a natal kinswoman before her puberty,
182 yet at the same time dangerous to be the first to receive these rights? I suggest that this is so
831 because of the great power accorded to elders in these castes, made possible by the joint
ownership of property by the lineage-segment under the legal headship of its senior man.
613 These property-arrangements perpetuate, often until middle age, male economic and emotional dependence on the parental generation, and enforce the attitudes of reverence and
564 masochistic submission to elders which so characterize the higher Hindu castes. This dependence on the parental generation causes male incestuous wishes to remain primarily fixed
423 on the mother, and secondarily on other close natal kinswomen throughout life, and perpetuates the corresponding unconscious fear of male parental vengeance. It is, therefore,
593 in male phantasy, both necessary to give away the sexual rights in natal kinswomen (who are
identified with the mother as desirable but forbidden sexual objects) before they are in danger of becoming mature, yet at the same time dangerous to deflower the virgins of other lineages who, being still 'owned' by their own natal kinsmen, are also unconsciously likened
To the mother.

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[1] I saw this festival in 1949. For fuller accounts see Thurston & Rangachari, (1909, V, pp. 400-05) and K. P. Padmanabha Menon (1935, IV, pp. 333-43).

CHART I. *Variations in Essential Features of the Tali-Rite in Four Groups*

Essential Features of the Ceremony	*South Malabar and Cochin Nayars*	*North Malabar Nayars*	*North Malabar Tiyyars*	*South Malabar and Cochin Tiyyars*
Basic economic and residential group in the Kinship System	Matrilineal lineage segment, uxorilocal	Matrilineal lineage segment with virilocal residence	Matrilineal lineage segment with virilocal residence; or patrilineal or ambilineal group	Patrilineal, patrilocal extended family
Descent and inheritance systems	Exclusively matrilineal	Matrilineal with strong paternal rights and obligations	Matrilineal with strong paternal rights and obligations	Double unilineal descent; patrilineal inheritance
Age of girl at *tāli*-rite	Pre-puberty	Pre-puberty	Pre-puberty	Pre-puberty
Place of ceremony	Matrilineal lineage's ancestral house	Matrilineal lineage's ancestral house	Matrilineal lineage's ancestral house or father's own house	Patrilineal group's ancestral house
Expenses of ceremony met by	Matrilineal lineage as a whole	Matrilineal lineage as a whole with help from fathers	Senior MB and father jointly	Father with help from senior MB
Preliminary mock menstrual seclusion	Yes	Uncertain	Yes	Yes
Girl ceremonially 'given away' by	Brother or head of matrilineal group	Brother or head of matrilineal group	MB, MBW, or father	Father; secondarily, MB
Tāli tied by	*Enangen*, district chief, or elderly Nambūdiri Brahman	Elderly Nambūdiri Brahman	MBW, FSi, prospective mother-in-law, or barber woman (Barbers – elderly man)	Young boy, sometimes prospective husband
Supplementary 'fertility' or 'defloration' rites performed by	Nambūdiri Brahman priest or village military leader	Marar (lower caste of funeral priests)	Barber	Village headman's wife
Subsequent seclusion of girl	Couple secluded as for cohabitation	Couple secluded as for cohabitation	Uncertain	Girl secluded with 'bridegroom' or with bridegroom's loin-cloth

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949) 1955

Nayar
Tiyyar

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626 was in a state of terrible fury. It was only with great trouble that they were per-
564 suaded not to excommunicate the poor man.

The Nāyar life and customs can be rightly understood only in the light of their
621 village organisation. The enormous influence the opinion of the village has in all
178 matters connected with their social, as well as their family, life is the main reason of the persistence of the Nāyars as a vigorous and healthy community in spite of strong economic pressure, merciless competition and fast changing conditions. It is also due to this system of organised life that the customs of sexual relationship and marriage, which look so loose and immoral on paper, are found actually to be decent and tolerable. The Nāyar community is not more immoral than any other community in the world. The restraining influence among them does not come from actual written law, as among the Hindus of other parts of India, or from a belief in any social philosophy present in the mind of at least the leaders of thought. It comes from the strong feeling of social propriety which the village has developed to a very high degree.

III.—FAMILY LIFE AMONG THE NĀYARS.

● 613 The Nāyar family consists of all the descendants from the same ancestress,
counting relationship exclusively from the side of the mother. Theoretically it
[425] may contain all those who have a common ancestry of this kind, but, in practice, when families grow unwieldy, they divide the common property and live under different roofs. Ordinary families consist of relations four or five degrees removed. The numerical strength of the family varies. In old and aristocratic families one finds sometimes fifty to eighty people, though one or two families can be mentioned in Malabar which contain one hundred and fifty to two hundred people.

The undivided family generally lives under the same roof. In the house itself only the females live, while the male members of the family occupy rooms set apart for them, or, if they are rich, live in houses in neighbouring compounds. The Nāyar
351 house has always a large piece of enclosed ground in front of it, which is called
613 *Muttam*. Often it is used as an ornamental garden, and no man of the lower caste may enter it. There the children walk about and play in daytime, and the women have their dance and general merriment in the evening. Behind the house is a
vegetable garden and a bathing tank, which is reserved exclusively for women.
[562] The dominant idea in the arrangement of the house is the proper separation of sexes in the family.

613 The family owns property in common. What a private individual earns
421 belongs to him exclusively, but when he dies it is joined to the rest of the family,
[177] according to the old Nāyar law which is still prevalent in some parts.[1] When the

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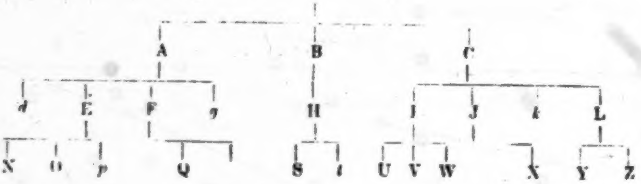
[1] Legal tendency has been to modify this practice.

613 425 When the family becomes unwieldy, or certain members show insubordination, the family property is partitioned equally among *each female line*. That is to say, if there are three sisters in the family, each having daughters and granddaughters, the partition is done in such a way that each of the ancestresses founds a separate family among whom the original property is equally divided./ It is best explained by a diagram: –



[Capital letters stand for women.]

In this case, supposing A, B and C dead, and the eldest male member *d*, being *Karnavan*, the male members, *t*, *k* and others demand partition. The joint property will be divided equally into three parts, each of the groups, in spite of their numerical difference, getting equal shares. Now, in the first group, there are two subdivisions to be made, while, in the third group, the property has to be further divided into three. Group 2 has only one female line, and, therefore, in that line, the property remains intact.

613 601 783 178 The partition of property does not affect the relationship. The members of a divided family are still called by the classificatory names, and a birth or death in one family creates pollution to the whole stock. Centuries might pass, but they would still remain strictly exogamous groups, and the rights of relationship (such as pollution, etc.) would continue, though in a lesser degree. There are many instances in which, though family partition took place at least a hundred and fifty years ago, the members continue to call each other brothers and sisters, as if they were the nearest blood relations.

613 834 593 It may be noticed in this connection that a Nāyar young man or woman is not supposed to talk to any relations of the opposite sex in the same family *if they are of almost the same age*. A younger brother can talk to a sister considerably older than himself; but under no conditions may he talk to a younger one, and in orthodox families this restriction is carried so far that if it is known that a brother is standing somewhere near, the sister scrupulously avoids him. It is the custom that after the *Talikettu kalyanam* the brother (own and collateral alike) is not supposed to see, talk to, or be in the same room with his sister. This involves considerable inconvenience, for, if the mother is dead and there is no one of *her generation* living, a man loses all touch with the family, because his sisters and women of that generation may not speak to him, and he may not go near them. In such cases, it is customary

613 834 593 for young men to go and stay in their wives' houses and visit their own families for business arrangements.

613 [421] [584] Authority in the family is wielded by the eldest member, who is called *kārnavan*. He has full control of the common property, and manages the income very much as he pleases. He arranges marriages (*sambandhams*) for the boys as well as the girls of the family. He had till lately full power (at least in practice) of alienating anything that belonged to them. His will was undisputed law. This is, perhaps, what is intended to be conveyed by the term *Matri-potestas* in communities of female [604] descent. But it should be remembered that among the Nāyars the autocrat of the family is not the mother, but the mother's brother.

613 421 The power of the *Kārnavan* over the family property has always been, in theory, limited, because the property was supposed to belong to every member of the family jointly. Till lately, however, it was practically impossible to limit the *Kārnavan's* power of mortgaging or even fully alienating it, because when it came to litigation the *Kārnavan* always pleaded that such action as he took was necessary for the welfare of the family, and justified himself by basing his arguments "on the discretionary power" vested in him. However, the old theory has lately been asserted in law that a *Kārnavan* can sell or mortgage the property only with the consent of the other members of the family.

All the moneys owing to the family can be paid only through him. He alone can give permission for the use of what belongs to the family. He can punish all the members of the family, either by depriving them temporarily of their allowance, or by prohibiting them to enter the house. In short, he is virtually the head of a tribe rather than the senior member of a family.

613 604 829 *The Wife of the Kārnavan.*—The wife of the *Kārnavan* has no standing in the family; yet as is but natural, she is supposed to be a dark and sinister force working against the interests of the *Tharawad*. Since she does not belong to the *Tharawad* of her husband she has no interest in its well-being, and it is generally supposed that the *Ammāvi* (the wife of the maternal uncle) is interested only in getting as much out of her husband's family for her own children as her influence over her husband allows. All the tales told to children have as the villain the *Ammāvi*, whose position is not only that of the wife of the maternal uncle, but also the mother-in-law of the brother. She is universally considered to be a sort of sinister stepmother.

613 604 586 [564] But it must be acknowledged that the Nāyar *Kārnavan* loves his sister's children more than his own. The explanation of this apparently unnatural feeling lies in two directions. First, the father is not necessarily of the same caste as the son. Secondly, there is always the possibility of a break in the union. Divorce is not a matter of any difficulty among the Nāyars, both the husband and wife having equal right to announce such a termination of their connection whenever either of [593] the parties desires to do so. This instability of relationship is the principal reason

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why a man's affection for his own son is neither so intense nor so permanent as his 586
affection for his sister's son. 593

Also, in matrilineal communities family tradition descends only through the 613
sister's progeny. As the Nāyars formed a fighting aristocracy before the British
conquest, they had naturally acquired family tradition, mottoes and arms, which 611
descend of right only in the female line. Hence also a man looks to the training 604
of his sister's sons to keep up his family tradition. All these contribute to an extraordinary, and at first sight inexplicable, tenderness towards the children of one's sister.

Relationship.[1]—Among the Nāyars the classificatory system of relationship is 601
prevalent. When the ties of the family extend not only to one's immediate relations [613]
but to all who trace descent from the same ancestress in the female line, it is but natural that the terms of close relationship are used to all who belong to the family. As a matter of fact, the distinction between own brothers and collateral brothers does not exist. All the persons of your own generation older than you are called brothers, and equal respect is shown to them. They are called by such terms as big brother, small brother, etc., *only when they are older than you.* Those who are younger are always called by their names.

All women of your mother's generation are called mothers; those older than your mother are called *Peramma* or *Valiamma*, which means nominal mother or bigger mother, and those younger are called *Kochamma*, little mothers. But unlike among brothers, the distinction between one's mother and other females of the same generation is always maintained. Though respect is paid to all of them alike, own mother is always spoken of as mother, without qualification, and she alone has complete right to command you. Mother's own sisters are also different from those who are only collateral cousins to her. Mother's own brother and all of his generation are called *Ammava* (literally mother's brother). Here also the distinction between own *Ammavas* and collateral *ammavas* was very slight in Nāyar society till nearly thirty years ago. Now, however, one looks more on one's own *Ammava* as different from others, which is obviously due to the influence of the authority of direct relationship inculcated through the new system of education.[2]

The mother-in-law has no special name. This is, of course, due to the universal 606
prevalence of first cross-cousin marriage. The mother-in-law is generally addressed 601

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[1] Spencer and Gillen (*Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 56) try to prove that the classificatory terminology to express relationship shows the existence in some earlier time of group [114]
marriages. Perhaps it does so when such relationship terms are in use in a patrilineal community. On the other hand, in a matrilineal community such terms have nothing to do with the system of marriage, but only with relationship counted on the mother's side.

[2] Note specially: though all the women of the mother's generation stand in equal relationship, it is only the actual parent that is entitled to be called mother without any qualification to it. All the others are spoken of in comparative terms, as big mother, *i.e.*, elder mother, small mother, *i.e.*, younger mother.

606 as *Ammari Amma*, the first word being the same as the wife of the mother's brother,
601 and the second an honorific addition to it. Dr. Rivers, in *Kinship and Social*
601 *Organisation*, as well as in *Melanesian Society*, has conclusively shown that wherever
606 first-cousin marriage prevails, there the mother-in-law has no special name. His
114 explanation that this is due to the obvious fact that, in most cases, the mother's
brother's wife is the same person as the mother-in-law, and that the former position
was antecedent to the latter, is fully borne out by the terminology among the Nāyars.

601 Another relation of importance in the Nāyar family life is the father's sister.
604 She has a special name and has a very special function to perform. In Middle
Travancore she is called *Appachi*. Her importance varies according to the status of the father's family. If the father's family is one of greater importance than one's own, then the father's sister is a person to be consulted on various matters with regard to the child. In any case she should be the first to visit the new-born child. This is called "*Kannom Kalcha.*" In the marriage ceremony also she has a prominent place.

● 613 *Enangar.*—The whole of Nāyar family life used to be based, though this has
621 decayed of late, on the close relationship with one or more other families, spoken
of as *Enangar* or Allies. A *Tharawad* with its *Enangars* formed *a social group* rarely marrying outside its fold and generally arranging all festivities and ceremonies between themselves. Neither funeral rites, nor marriage ceremony, nor even any one of the hundred other minor things which go to make up the ordinary life of a Nāyar family, can take place without the co-operation, or at least the presence, of
[564] a member from the *Enangar* or allied families. The *Enangar* families are always
[264] of the same sub-caste, with a right to eat with you and enter any part of your house.

The *Enangar* system is evidently a kinship organisation, forming an intermarrying
613 class. The question of its origin is a very difficult one. The prevalent
621 opinion is that it originated in the days when Nāyars fought and farmed in alternate
582 months, when a kinship organisation of some sort was very necessary for safety
178 and success. This organisation has become very lax of late, though it cannot in
any way be said to be dying out.

582 *Marriage Restrictions.*—The marriage restrictions prevalent among the Nāyars have nothing much peculiar from the rest of the Hindu society. The bride must always be younger than the man, and must in strict orthodoxy belong to the same generation as his. He may not marry his mother's sister's daughter, who is to him as his own sister. All his sisters, own and collateral, together with ladies of a previous generation in his family, form a legal incestuous group. A man has, therefore, to marry either entirely out of the circle of his relations, or from among his *cross-cousins*.

Cross-cousin marriage[1] is the orthodox custom. Your maternal uncle's

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[191] [1] By cross-cousins I mean children of brother and sister. The relationship is expressed by the word *Machuna*, which is, it should be noticed, the same as in the Toda language. Among

595 It is a point very keenly debated as to how far polyandry was prevalent among the Nāyars in olden days. During the last fifty years no trace of such a system has been found. It is to a certain extent true that there is extreme instability of marriage relationship among the commoner folk even now. [538] But for a woman to have more than one husband at a time *seems to have been against the moral ideas of the community even two hundred years ago.*[1] Nāyar ballads and poetry of that age contain many passages where polyandry is spoken of as a barbarous and unknown custom.

But though strict polyandry does not seem to have existed at any time, traces of a *system of supplementary spouses*, very much like the Pirauru custom among the Australians, exist even now. [613] [621] [582] In the *Enangar* or allied families, which we have noticed before, any woman of the same generation and in the same relationship as cross-cousin is eligible for marriage, and even if she is married, the young man whose spouse she might have been has certain rights—not distinctly conjugal, but still pertaining to it. He is the one who avenges her against insults. Her children call him "little father," and he has the right of entering any part of her apartments. Among the commoner folk a system of conjugal relationship may still exist. It is practically certain that this is a survival of the system of *supplementary spouses* such as we have in Australia and other places.

562 In this connection it may be interesting to notice the general position of women in Nāyar society. On *a priori* grounds we are inclined to assume that the position of women in matrilineal communities is higher than in patrilineal societies of the same standard of culture. How strongly this opinion is held will be seen from the fact that even in other parts of South India Malabar is spoken of as the "Land where women rule." It is impossible to make a general statement as to the relative status of women in matrilineal and patrilineal communities. But as far as the Nāyars are concerned, their women enjoy equality with men. [871] [875] They can hold property in their own right and enter the professions they choose. Traditions of scholarship and art are, perhaps, stronger among them than among men. Some of the best Malayalam poets and scholars have been Nāyar women, and at the present day the statistics of female education show a higher percentage of English-educated girls among them than among any other Indian community. All the girls' schools in Travancore are manned by them, and some of them hold such high administrative posts as inspectorships of girls' schools.

595 562 Polygamy was indeed prevalent, and is still legally permitted among the Nāyars. But this, in my opinion, does not show an inferiority of status. Though the opinion of Nāyar women would strongly be against the wife of the Akikuyu chieftain who told Mrs. Routledge that she would like her husband to have as many wives as possible,[2] there is no reason to believe that the possession of more than one wife

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[1] See Note 3 at the end. Appendix on "McLennan and the Nair Type of Polyandry."

[2] Among a Prehistoric People (Akikuyu).

588 to grow up. There is one important custom (and Mr. Ananta Krishna Aiyer forgets [114] to notice it)[1] which forbids two generations of girls being married together. When girls become mothers at sixteen, generations mingle frequently and often there may be girls younger than oneself who are one's mother's sisters and, therefore, stand logically in the same position as one's mother. The custom is that they should not undergo the ceremony together, though this is strictly kept up only in richer families.

[623] The first step to this ceremony is a village and *enangar* council. The prominent [613] people of the village and the *enangars* are invited and the *Kārnavan* takes counsel with them as to the various arrangements with regard to the ceremony. After the [787] *Kaniyan*, or the medicine man (who is also the astrologer and magician), has fixed the auspicious hour for the ceremony, a *pandal*, or a decorated tent, is put up in the [791] presence of the village elders, in the *Muttam*. In the middle of the tent so erected is kept the *Astamangalyam* (Sanskrit word *Asta* = 8, *mangalyam* = happiness giving). The *Astamangalyam* consists of a measure of paddy, some rice, an absolutely white cloth (to show purity), an arrow (to show the warlike character), lighted lamp (uninterrupted prosperity), a looking-glass, and a *cheppu* (which is the Malabar equivalent of a powder puff), and a blossom of the coco-nut palm.

The ceremony of *Talikettu* can take place any time of the day, only it must be an auspicious hour. Evening is preferred because more gaiety is possible. Early in the morning the girls are taken to the family tanks by the women of the *Enangar* [301] house, and have an oil bath. After this they are elaborately dressed. They put on various ornaments used only for that day. All the families, of course, do not possess these ornaments; generally, only one or two families in the village have them, but they are available for all on such occasions.

The tier of the *Tali*, who is generally a priest, or sometimes a Kshatriya lord, is invited, and he stops at a house near by. The day before the ceremony he goes, accompanied by the village elders on an elephant, in a procession to the nearest temple and gets the *Tali* consecrated by the priest of the temple. In these days I have seen the *Tali*-tier taken in a motor car to the temple, though the slow-moving elephant is more impressive.

At the auspicious hour the bridegroom, in a warrior's dress (with sword, etc.), arrives at the house, accompanied by a party of the villagers. He is welcomed by the [576] male members of the family, and taken to a seat of honour. There the brother (own or collateral) of the girls washes his feet (this is a custom of extreme politeness prevalent among the Hindus). Then the brides are brought into the *pandal*. They make a *pradikshana* (go round the *pandal* by their left three or seven times). The [605] eldest girl's father's sister's son (*i.e.*, her marriageable cousin) gives some brand-new pieces of fine silk cloth, and then the priest or the warrior ties the *Tali* round the girls' necks. This is followed by a huge feast which goes on for four days. On

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[1] *Cochin Tribes and Castes*, vol. ii, chapter on the Nāyars.

595 175 [602] [114] 595 174 538 the last fifty years. All the evidence that we have of this custom among the Nāyars in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, are from foreign travellers who, it must be remembered, were not allowed to come within sixty yards of a Nāyar house. Their evidence, therefore, is an extremely unsatisfactory ground for dogmatising on Nāyar customs. On the other hand, the extensive Malayalam literature of that period contains no single allusion to polyandry. The works of Kunchan Nambiar, whom it is no exaggeration whatever to compare to Molière, though he describes minutely the social life of the Nāyars of the early eighteenth century with its laxity of morals, redeemed only by chivalry of conduct, makes no mention whatever of polyandry. On the other hand, in a famous passage he makes the declaration: "It is against the laws of all castes for a woman to have four or five husbands."

Nalanchu barthavoru thikku thanatu
Nalu jatikkum Viddhichatallorkanam.

595 174 How far this statement is decisive it is difficult to say. But one thing seems to be clear from it, that the idea in itself was repugnant to the community as a whole, though individuals might have practised it here and there.[1]

V.—BIRTH AND FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

844 Among the Nāyars, as among all the people whose life is regulated by magico-religious customs, child-birth is an event of great and mysterious significance. Especially is this the case with regard to the first child. Therefore the ceremonies of nativity are of an intenser and more magical character during the time of the first pregnancy than during subsequent ones. Indeed, the mysterious nature of childbearing is entirely lost after the first time, and the ceremonies on subsequent occasions are only a few tabus, which are generally, in the phraseology of Van Genepp, "rites dynamistes directs et negatives."

843 613 The most important of the pre-natal ceremonies is *Pulicudi*,[2] or the drinking of the tamarind juice; and the customs relating it are as follows: On the appointed day all the *enangars* (people belonging to the same kingship organization) come to the house early in the morning, and the pregnant woman is taken out by one of them and bathed, after rubbing oil all over her. Then she is dressed for the occasion and, entering the house from the north, sits looking eastward. The astrologer, [564] [789] [604] [593] who being of a lower caste commonly stands in the outer courtyard, calculates the auspicious hour. He sends word when the time is come, and the *Ammāvi* (the wife of the mother's brother, and mother-in-law by right of the brother) pours a few drops of tamarind juice in a small silver bowl. The brother or the uncle of the

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[1] See Note 3, Appendix.

[114] [2] Dr. Rivers makes some obviously erroneous deductions based upon this word, for which see note on "The Similarities between Nāyars and the Todas," Appendix, Note 2.

pregnant woman, taking a sword, generally kept for this purpose, and holding it in 843
the left hand points it to her mouth. The juice is then poured on it in such a way as 613
to fall by drops into her open mouth. After this, one of the women of the *enanga* [604]
group smears the body and head of the pregnant woman with coco-nut oil and takes [593]
her to the tank. She is also required to choose one from a collection of different grains, [787]
and it is believed you can say from the choice what the sex of the child is going to be. [842]

The significance of the ceremony seems to be twofold. First, it is the official 843
notification to the allied families as well as to the local village groups of the fact that 613
a woman is lawfully pregnant in the house. The intervention of the *Ammāvi* or the 182
mother's brother's wife is supposed to show that everything is as it ought to be. [604]
It is, therefore, in the first place merely a social announcement. Secondly, the 843
actual ceremony with the sword is supposed to have the effect of making the child 182
a warrior, and it is believed to impart the virtues of bravery, manliness and honest 789
dealing. It is, therefore, in the classification of Van Genepp, a rite direct, sympathetic,
automatic and positive. The tamarind juice is believed to create sensitiveness
and honour. It is a "contagionist" rite. Whenever a man shows cowardice,
the question that is asked as a mark of contempt is: "Were you not born after
Pulicudi?" or "did not your mother drink the tamarand juice?"

After the *Pulicudi* there are many prohibitions which a pregnant woman has to 843
respect. Of this the most important is the absolute sexual tabu which dates from the
Pulicudi to forty days after the childbirth. Other tabus are mainly connected with
food and are mostly "contagionist" positively or negatively. Thus the woman is
not supposed to take very warm food, as it might scorch the head of the child; she
is not supposed to eat much hot food (chilis, pepper, etc.), because it might put out
the eyes of the child. There are no definite rules about these, but every mother in
her desire to do the child no possible harm keeps herself away from all doubtful
matter.

After the birth of the child there is a mild pollution (as compared to the strong 846
untouchable pollution caused by death) in the family. This pollution does not carry 783
any disabilities except the prohibition to enter any sacred precincts. On the
fifteenth day there is a purificatory ceremony, but there are no festivities or celebrations
connected with it.

The mother and the child are accommodated in a special room which no man
may enter. Unmarried girls, unless they are little children, are also not allowed to
go near. The child, of course, can be seen by all after the cutting and burying of
the umbilical cord. It is handed round to the father and other interested relations.
No kind of food except the mother's milk is given to it, and, if the mother died at the 853
birth of the child, it is generally given the milk of some relations or even of outsiders
who have children of almost the same age. The person whose milk the child thus 846
drinks, though she be an outsider, is considered equal to its own mother, and her 608
children are considered the same as own brothers. There is a story of a Nāyar

853 king who as a child lost his mother and was therefore fed on the milk of an attendant
846 woman, refusing to punish her son after repeated acts of treason on the ground that
608 an ocean of milk flowed between them which a drop of blood would pollute for ever.

852 On the twenty-eighth day the child undergoes two ceremonies. The first is
301 called *Erupathettu Kettuka*, or the "Tying of the twenty-eighth day." Before that
789 day the child is not allowed to wear any ornaments. On the twenty-eighth day a silver or gold belt, or a mere cord with an ornament in the shape of a heart or a laurel leaf at the front, is tied to the waist of the child. The laurel leaf was most certainly meant as a charm in ancient days, while now it is nothing more than an ornament. The waist-belt occasionally has attached to it amulets made sacred by the repetition of *mantrams* or magical formulæ over it. Such amulets are worn for the purpose of preventing disease and keeping the child safe from the demons and other evil spirits.[1]

553 After this comes the name-giving ceremony. The astrologer announces the star
787 under which the child is born and presents the horoscope. Then he mentions the initial letters of the names. Each star has generally two or three letters, and the whole of Sanskrit and Malayalam can be drawn upon for the names of deities beginning with those letters. The choice is really very wide, even with the most difficult initial letters.

852 The child is not supposed to be carried out of its mother's family till the sixth
602 month. Then, on an auspicious day it is taken to the father's house (if the father
431 is a Nāyar) by the mother, with some tokens of respect to the father's sister. These
[824] presents generally are tobacco leaves (always a mark of respect among the Nāyars), betel, etc. The father's family generally gives a certain sum of money for the expenses of the coming ceremony.

852 These proceedings are preliminary to the ceremony of *Choru Koda*, or the giving
262 of rice. For the first six months the child is given only the cooked flour of dried plantain fruits. Rice, which is the chief food of the Nāyars, is strictly prohibited
[123] before the *Choru Koda*. As a boy of fourteen or fifteen, I have many times officiated
[613] in this ceremony, on one occasion as a member of the father's family and on others as a member of the maternal *Tharawad*. What is done is that the child is taken to the temple by its mother, accompanied by some women of the *Enangu* group, together with a male representative from the father's house (if the father is a Nāyar) and
[782] one from the mother's own family. There is an offering to the god of the temple
[783] in the form of rice cooked with milk and sugar, and all the party, after purifying

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[241] [1] The question of origins is very difficult, yet we cannot pass without noticing the idea that the loin cords are the beginnings of dress. Professor Wilhelm Wundt, in his well-known book
[114] on *The Elements of Folk Psychology*, has shown conclusively that it has no reference to the development of clothing, but is entirely magical in its purpose (pp. 86–87). The prevalent custom among the Nāyars supports this view. The custom can be understood only in relation to the general beliefs about cord-magic and the efficacy of amulets attached to waistbands.

This is mostly due to two reasons: 434
First of all, there is the joint family system which provides for all the members [182]
without distinction. Secondly, every Nāyar family lives on its own plot of ground [245]
on which coco-nut palms are grown, which bring in a small but quite comfortable sum.

The standard of life is comparatively high. Among the richer classes it is fairly decent, even according to the higher material standards of Europe, while, among the poorer classes, it never comes anywhere near the uncleanliness, the misery, the unrefined and uncultured barbarism which is the atmosphere of the slum life of the big cities of Europe. Poverty is less disreputable than in civilised communities, and the difference this makes is immense. The peculiarly civilised idea that success is the criterion of intrinsic merit, and that, consequently, failure by itself proves that it was deserved, is almost totally unheard of among the Nāyars. 511 The fact that the individual members of a family have to pool their abilities and, to some extent, their personal incomes, prevents the sharp distinction between the rich and the poor which is so characteristic of societies organised on an individual basis. [613] [182]

Food.—The Nāyars are not vegetarians. Like all Hindus, they do not eat beef, but nothing else is prohibited. Fish is a favourite article of food, and there is an old couplet which sings: 262

> " *Katal wizhakkā Kari yuntoru vaka*
> *Bhata Bhojana matu Kootiltillā.*" [539]

> " Then there is a kind of banana of the seas (fish)
> And the Nayars cannot live without it."

There is another couplet, which says:

> " There is nothing among the various kinds of food which equals the flesh of a boar."

The Nāyars are great epicures and they cook beautifully. Rice, of course, is the staple food, but milk curds, butter and *ghee* are things of equal importance.

Most Nāyar families have three meals a day. The breakfast, among the poor 264
people, consists of rice boiled with water in the form of a pudding. With it is taken 262
as relishes pickles, fried fish, cooked vegetables, etc. The next meal is at noon. The main course, of course, is rice. The first part of it is eaten with butter, boiled peas, and many other relishes. The second course is fish, vegetables, etc., mixed with rice. The third part is eaten with buttermilk, mangoes, and pickles. The supper at night is also a meal of which rice is the chief part. The thing about it is that, though the main course is the same as porridge among the Scotch, the variety, as well as the taste, of the subsidiary dishes is what makes all the difference.

Clothing.—The typical Nāyar (male) clothing is the *Mundu*. This is generally 291
2½ yards long, 1½ yards broad, cloth of fine texture made at Eraniyal, in South 184
Travancore. Nowadays, people wear cotton cloth from Lancashire, while the [439]
richer classes go in for Benares silk.

gent, persevering, and prosperous community. Fourthly, there are the foreign 178 564
Brahmins, who are chiefly usurers, making money by lending at a fabulous high rate
of interest and buying up property. Now, the *Tharawad* (or the joint undivided
family) system gives the Nāyars a great advantage. Their capital is strategically 178
massed, so to say, and while the property of a family is joined together its credit is 613
much more than it would be if it were divided between the various members. Intel- 434
ligent Nāyars see the advantage of this position, and are loth to break up what is most certainly an effective economic organisation.

The tendencies of change that are visible are mainly the following: 178

There is, first of all, a distinct process of change from the *matrilocal* to the *patri-* 591
local system. This is at present confined to a few of the English-educated families. The officials and those in learned professions have their wives and children staying with them, and this has most certainly set up a new current of opinion. The tendency among these people has been to change the matrilocal matriliny into patrilocal. The older families still look with disapproval on this, and it has not progressed very much, except among a few ultra-moderns. Even in orthodox families the women were allowed for a few months every year to go and stay with their husband's people. Now, by the Nāyar Regulation Act (1912) of Travancore, the husband is given the right to demand that his wife should come and stay with him. Of course, it is open to the *Karnavan* to prohibit this, but in such a case the husband can divorce his wife immediately. Therefore we may safely predict a definite change to a patrilocal system among the English-educated classes of Nāyars.

But whether this would contribute towards a change from matrilineal to 178
patrilineal system is a question more difficult to answer. On the whole I am 611
inclined to answer it in the negative. But for the economic competition of other communities, the Nāyars would certainly have partitioned their estates and started on a patrilineal existence. But now it is too late. The economic interest involved is so vast, the number of people to be affected by it so great, the change in itself so revolutionary, that it is, for a long time at least, beyond the scope of either legislative or administrative action. It would, indeed, be very interesting to watch the line of evolution which such a community, placed as it is between the close and powerful oligarchy of the Nampudiri Brahmins, and the no less powerful and at present unquestionably more aggressive Syrian Christians, would take. The next quarter of a century will probably solve the problem. What the solution will be it is impossible for us to say; that it will not for a long long time, at least, be real patriliny, I can prophesy; the rest time alone can answer.

APPENDIX.

Note No. 1.—The Origin of the word "Nāyars." 101

There are many reasons to believe that the term Nāyar is a corrupted form of the word *Nagar* or "serpent-men." The generally accepted derivation of the word

595 circumstances of his matrimonial life. If however he do so, [554] his family and society will not recognise it as such, and no woman of any respectability will enter into such an alliance.

Duration of conjugal union.

586 According to the customary rules of *sambandham*, the relationship between husband and wife, ceases at the will and pleasure of either party; but in practice, such dissolution of marriage is of rare occurrence. The woman generally does not leave her husband, while the man may send her away [613] whenever he chooses to do so. Marriage can be dissolved only with the consent of the *káranavans* or the other elders of the family. There are certain formalities to be observed in this connection, which vary in detail in different places, but some secret act indicating the intention of repudiation seems necessary before the divorce. In the event of the husband trying to effect a separation from his wife, he sends two or three respectable men to give intimation to the *káranavan* of the wife's family setting forth his reason for so doing. If the wife wishes to terminate the *sambandham*, she brings it to the notice of the *káranavan*, and with his consent tells the husband in the presence of her relatives the reasons for discarding [84] him. In the northern parts of the State, especially in the Chittur Taluk, the prevailing custom is to send for the husband and two of the fellow caste-men and to declare the reluctance of the woman to continue as wife, in the presence of these men. In some cases, instead of the formal declaration of the dissolution of marriage, certain conduct on the part of the parties is tantamount to such a declaration, such, for instance, as the failure by the husband or his family to send the usual presents to the family of the wife for *Onam*, *Vishu* and *Thiruvathira*, the refusal of the wife's people to accept them when sent, the failure to pay for wife's sustenance attended with deliberate omission to visit her, the deliberate absence for three consecutive nights with the consent of the elders from her husband's room. As a rule, no dissolution is allowed unless the cases for the same are enquired into and discussed by guardians and relations. Though a woman is free to marry and to dissolve the union, yet, as a rule, she 626 never does so. The fear of social disgrace and self interest [84] stand in the way of a woman's attempt to separate from her [522] husband. In Cochin as well as in South Malabar, the women

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and takes it in his hands. The belief is, that the temperament 852
of the child is determined by that of the person who thus [828]
sprinkles the water. All the members of the *tarawād* observes [613]
pollution for fifteen days immediately after the delivery, during [783]
which period they are prohibited from entering temples and
holy places.

First birth-day celebration.

The twenty-seventh day after the childbirth or the first 553
recurring day of the star under which it was [853]
born, is an important day, on which the
kāranavan of the family gives to the child [613]
a spoonful or two of milk mixed with sugar and slices of plantain
fruits reduced to a kind of pulp. Then he names the child
calling it in the ear by name, three times. In some places the naming 553
ceremony takes place in the sixth month on the *Chōrūnu* 574
day, *i. e.*, on the day of feeding. This is followed by a feast [613]
to all friends and relations, the expenses of which are met
by the *kāranavan* of the *tarawād*. The child is not fed on 853
rice for some time after birth, the practice being to give it the
flour of dried plantain boiled with jaggery. There is a particular
variety of plantain known as *kunnan* used for this purpose.
Well-to-do parents in these days give Mellin's food.
The staple food, which is rice, is given to the child for the 852
first time, generally during the sixth month, and is, of course, 853
attended with some ceremony. Necessarily, the astrologer
fixes the day, and at the auspicious hour, the child is bathed and
adorned (which is the duty of the father), is brought and laid
on a plank. A plantain leaf is spread in front of it, and a bright
brass lamp is placed near. On the leaf are served a small
quantity of cooked rice, generally a portion of the rice offered
to some temple divinity, some tamarind, salt, chillies and sugar.
Then the *kāranavan* or the father ceremoniously sits down [613]
facing the child. First he puts into the mouth of the child, a
mixture of tamarind, chillies and salt, then some rice, and lastly
a little sugar. Thenceforward, the ordinary food of the
child is rice. The ceremony is, in some cases, preferably performed [778]
in some famous temple, that at Guruvayur being a
favourite one for this purpose. A few annas is given to the [782]
priest, who gives a small quantity of the food offered to the [465]
deity, with which the child is fed.

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Sivagothrakár (worshippers or followers of Siva), would seem to 564 indicate that they reverence Siva more than Vishnu. [782]

A Nayar tarawad or marumakkathayam family.

"No people" says Elie Reclus, "have more fully appreciated [769] the maternal family, nor developed it 613 more logically than the Nayars, despite the 592 accumulated obstacles thrown in its way by a race admirably intelligent and moreover victorious."[1] The *tarawád* or *marumakkathayam* family consists in theory of all persons who can trace their descent in the female line from a single ancestress. In its simplest form it is one which consists of mother and her children, living together with their maternal uncle, that is the mother's brother, as *káranavan* or the senior male member of the family. In its complex form it consists of a mother and all her children, both male and female, all her grand children by her daughters, all her brothers and sisters and the descendants on the sisters' side,—in short, all the relatives of the woman on the female side, however distant their relationship, living together in the same block of buildings, dining together in the same hall and enjoying all the property in common. No descendant through the male line can be a member of such a family. There are at present instances of families containing a hundred or more members who live in one or more buildings situated in a large compound and who are the descendants of one woman separated perhaps by generations of descent, and yet able to trace their common descent from one ancestress.

In such a family the woman senior to others in age was originally mistress or head of the family, and she reigned or governed. Her eldest daughter was prime minister in the family, and through her all orders were transmitted to her little world. The son recognised the priority of the mother before whom he did not even venture to seat himself, unless she had given him permission. The brother obeyed the elder [593] sister, and respected the younger ones. In fact, the affection [581] between brother and sister was a feeling that endured, while conjugal love was but a passing sentiment. The wives of brothers and sons held but a secondary position in the family. The Nayars loved their families more than [842] anything else in the world, and made it the end of their existence. Like all Hindus they held reprehensible the man who

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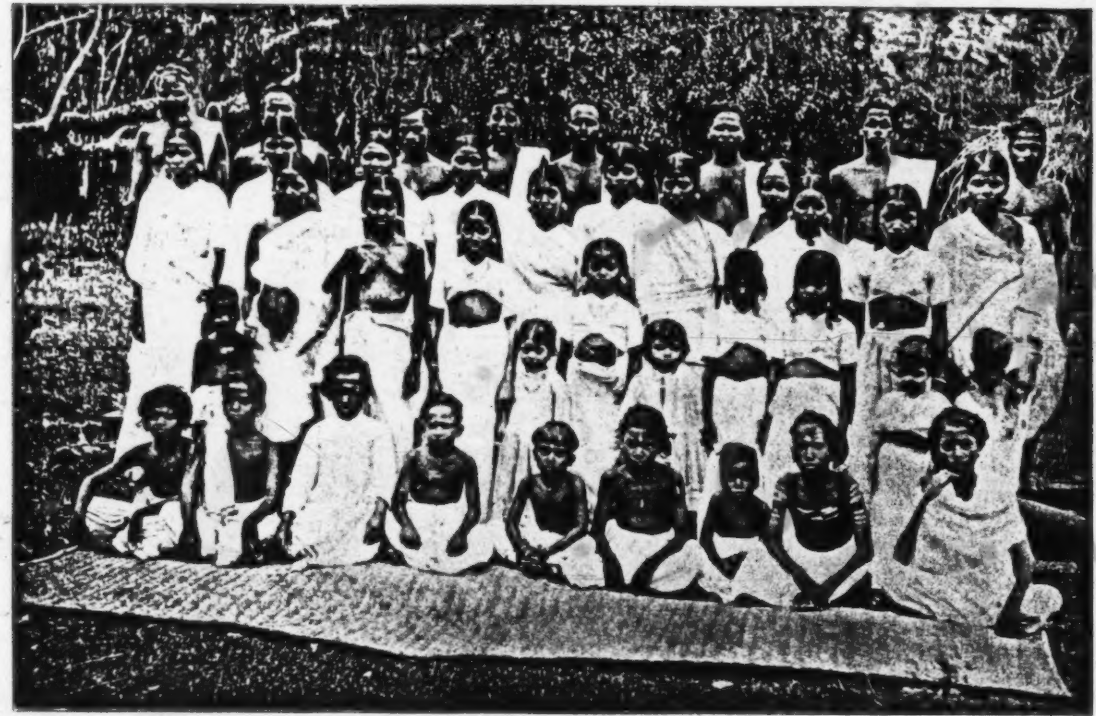
[1] Primitive folk, page 159.

[facing p. 47]



A TYPICAL NAYAR FAMILY

9:Iyer E-4,5 (ca.1902-1906)1912
A W11 Kerala A W11
Nayar

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592 deliberately refused to be a father and deprived himself of the
[842] sweet cares involved by the rearing of the children, they were
indignant with a girl who refused to be a mother, and those who
had not reproduced their species were considered to be subject to
613 terrible punishments in the next world. The old order of things
592 has given place to the new. Many of the old time-honoured
178 customs have already disappeared or begun to disappear. The
senior woman is no longer the head of the family, and she has
given place to the eldest male member who is known as *káranavan*.
592 In a joint family which contains a large or fairly a large number
613 of females and males, the former with their children occupy
the main building or buildings and the latter live apart in
another edifice close to and separated from them. Each of
the married women has a room or two; and here her husband
visits her. The old women and others occupy the common
[851] portion of the house. The boys under age live with their
mother under whose care they always are, and the father as a
casual visitor does not generally concern himself with the
[591] rearing of children. These, after coming of age, join the
the adult members, and if they can afford it, live in houses of
their own with their wives and children. Where the domestic
environments are favourable and the influence of the *káranavan*
(as the father in a patriarchal family) and other senior
member prevails, the junior members seldom go wrong. In
some cases where such influences do not exist, their conduct
592 is not always satisfactory. The habits of the members are
613 generally regular, and the usual time of rising throughout the
512 year is early dawn. After rising, the males either go to
their daily routine, or wait for their morning light meal which
they partake after bathing and after worshipping the deity
[264] in the local temple. The women attend to their children,
look to the domestic minor work, bathe and prepare the breakfast.
[515] Great attention is paid to their personal cleanliness.
As water is near at hand, men, women, and children take
a great pleasure in bathing, which, besides being conducive
to cleanliness, is also considered purificatory and curative.
[264] Their substantial dinner is, as a rule, a little before midday,
[574] and the rest of the day is occupied by the women and
others either in the perusal of religious books or in the
playing of some indoor game, while visits in the afternoon
are also indulged in.

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are also indulged in. In these days of modern civilization, 592
when schools for boys and girls have increased in [871]
the State, many take advantage of the instruction imparted
in them, so that when the latter become adults, they profitably
spend their leisure hours in reading religious and other
books. Towards the evening they go to the temple for worshipping [788]
and go round it several times, which, though hygienic
in its origin, is considered of religious importance. They return [264]
home, and their supper is generally before eight o'clock; after
this they retire to their rooms, each married woman occupying
her separate room or set of rooms. They lie on mats or beds [573]
spread on the floor or on the latter placed on cots with which [352]
the rooms are neatly furnished. Such in brief is the family [556]
life and organisation of well-to-do families of the Nayars. In
poor families in which the members subsist by hard work, [184]
the daily routine of life considerably differs from those described [735]
above.

Mention has already been made of the ***kāranavan***, who is the 613
manager of all affairs in the Nayar family. He is legally responsible 421
for the proper management of the joint property, for the 592
education of the junior members and for everything conducive
to the general welfare and happiness of every member of the
family. It must be remembered that the family property is joint
property and that no member can claim that any portion of it
belongs to him or to her, nor can any individual member
claim a separate possession or enjoyment of any portion. The
ground-work of the system is, that the family property is held
in trust for the support of the females and their descendants
in the female line. The property is impartible and the
family is indissoluble except with the consent of all its
members. When, in course of time, the family becomes too
unwieldy to be governed and managed by one man, the
circumstances and natural forces bring about a division of the
family into various distinct sections or families. These separate
families keep up the original traditions of their common
descent, but have no legal right to the property of one another.
The members of the family and their descendants in the female
line, thus separated by partition from the main stock, form a
tāvazhi (***ta***=mother, ***vazhi***=line, ***i. e.***, mother's line). They
live in a separate building and own that portion of the joint property
which is theirs in the partition, and which is managed

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592 by the woman's brother or some other senior member as
[421] *káranavan.*

There are some who love and admire the system, and they depict the *tarawád* as a group of males and females bound together by the sacred tie of common descent from one ancestors' grand-mother. "The females have only to follow the natural instinct to be fruitful and to multiply, while the males, free from all care for their own progeny, are expected to labour like the honey bee for the common good of the *tarawád*-hive, and pour their earnings into the lap of the venerable *káranavan*, who, in the exercise of absolute discretion, administers the income for the benefit of all. Protected by the impartibility of the estate, refreshed by the acquisitions of the junior members, and under the beneficent sway of the senior male, the *tarawád* would rise high and endure through generations."[1] The advantages of such a complete joint family system are three-fold: firstly, the genial society it affords, the closest association of young and old, and the abundant opportunity for recreation and instruction; secondly, in the process of production many of the advantages of concerted labour are secured, as is obvious, without carelessness, dishonesty or misdirected production and consumption; and thirdly, there is the remarkable saving in the process of consumption. The
[562] freedom and independence of Nayar women, their influence in the family and the absence of conventional restrictions, such as child marriage, enforced widowhood and the other customs which exercise so baneful an influence upon Hindu society elsewhere are other advantages that add to the excellence of the Nayar system of life.

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178 The system above described, may have worked smoothly enough in former days; but in these days of civilization, with the growing wants of the members, coupled with the indifference and selfishness of the *káranavan* and the other members, the joint family tends to disintegration. At a certain point the mere increase of the members renders it intolerable for them all to live together under one roof, and when that stage is reached, the *tarawád* splits up into *távazhis*, each containing a mother, her brothers and her children.

[562] It is to the woman that the fortune of the family belongs, and yet she is not the mistress of the house but only one

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[1] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 44.

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of many joint members dependent on the *káranavan*. The 592 females and the junior members pass their lives in utter 182 discontent and misery, if the *káranavan* happens to be unsym- 178 pathetic and tyrannical. The father is not the legal guardian [562] of his children, for whose training and education the *káranavan* is responsible. In families, where there are many boys and girls, the chances are that he educates none of them, on the plea that he cannot afford to educate them all, nor can he make any invidious distinction. The family, in certain cases, becomes the [578] seat of envy, hatred and dissensions, and not a day passes without some dispute or other among the members. It is said that with the advancement of civilization the system becomes more and more unworkable ; it offends against every principle of economy, healthy life and natural affection. By freeing a man from the obligation of maintaining his wife and children, it sanctions the reckless propagation of species, destroys the motive power for prudence and foresight, forces up the population to the very point where it must be kept down by actual want of means of subsistence. It "huddles together" as a family a number of distant relatives not necessarily drawn to each other by any bond of natural affection. It makes home life impossible, for the father is a casual visitor, and mother and children are but units in a heterogeneous flock, dependent on a practically irresponsible guardian, who from a mere accident of his being the eldest of the flock is expected to be able to regard every member with an impartial eye, and at the same time preserve the interests of his wife and children.[1] These causes are at work and tend to divide the families into several branches in the direction of *tavazhis* by partition. Fortunately, in the Cochin State, such evils as those above described are of rare occurrence, for partition is effected as early as the symptoms of disunion and ill-feeling among the members are visible.

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[1] Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 48.

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CHAPTER III.

THE SUDRAS OF COCHIN.

A. THE HIGH CASTE SUDRAS (NAYARS)

(Continued).

592 The Nayars follow the *marumakkatháyam* law of succes-
613 [611] **Inheritance.** sion, *i. e.*, the law which regulates succession
through the female line. The senior male member called the
káranavan is entitled to the full possession of the property, and
is absolute in its management. The junior members, on the
other hand, have a claim to residence and maintenance in the
family house. They cannot call for an account except as an
incident to a prayer for the removal of the manager for gross
misconduct, nor claim any specific share of the income, nor
even require that the maintenance provided for them should be
in proportion to the income of the *tarawád*. An absolute
discretion in this direction is vested in the manager who is the
legal guardian of every member of the family.[1] He is not
accountable to any member in the *tarawád* in respect of its
income, nor can a suit be maintained for an account of the
tarawád property in the absence of fraud on his part. He is
under no obligation to support any member of his *tarawád* by
his own labour or from his self-acquisitions. The only rest-
[425] raint on him in the management is, that he cannot alienate
the lands of the family except with the consent of all the other
members and without proper necessity.[2] If a family has so far
increased in the number of its members that they cannot
conveniently live under the same roof any longer, it divides
itself with the consent of the senior member into *távazhis*
to each of which is assigned a portion of the property for maintenance, and such *távazhis* may reside in
separate houses or farm-houses belonging to the family and
appropriating from the lands newly assigned to them an
income sufficient to maintain themselves. In the partition of

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[1] Vide Mayne's Hindu Law, sec. 268,

[2] I. L. R. II, Mad. 328.

a Nayar *tarawád*, all the members are equally entitled to a 592 share. The self-acquisitions of each member of a *tarawád* 613 are at his absolute disposal during his life-time, but this right [421] lapses to the *tarawád* on his death.[1] In families where the *káranavans* look after the welfare of each individual member and the savings of the junior members go to increase the wealth of the family, there is peace and prosperity. Such families 592 are rarely found in these days. Times are changed, as also 613 the conditions of the community, and the old and large 182 families are disappearing through mismanagement. In the majority of cases, when the senior member takes up the management, he is too old and unfit to govern a score of men and women younger than himself and bound to him by no natural tie of affection. He often becomes a mere puppet in the hands of an unscrupulous but stronger member while the other members of the *tarawád* suffer from the injustice consequent under such circumstances. In some cases he misappropriates the family property and alienates it in favour of his wife and children, and the gross acts of spoliation carried on by *káranavan* have reduced some of the respectable families in Malabar and elsewhere to poverty and misery. It is also said, that the junior members are disobedient and do not work for the common good and this state of things is also common everywhere. Another cause for the downfall of the ancient family system is the growing disinclination among its junior members to work for the common good of the *tarawád* and their dislike to the rule of the *káranavan*.[2]

The Nayars who follow this *marumakkatháyam* law of [611] inheritance include nearly all the aristocracy of the country, [556] but the notion that every *tarawád* has an estate sufficient to feed an indefinite number of souls is unfounded and erroneous. Most of the families are poor, and the *káranavans* are mere tenant farmers cultivating a few acres of land on a precarious tenure, and a law which requires such a man, from the produce of his farm, to feed and provide for all the descendants of his female relatives from the time of their birth to their death, whether they work or not, is one of those laws which continue to exist in name but are actually disregarded in practice.[3]

Tribal organisations.

In ancient times the rulers of Cochin held supreme sway 631 in the territories which belonged to them. 643 There were no regular councils, nor assemblies;

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[1] II, Mad. H. C, R. 162.

[2] and [3]. Malabar Marriage Commission Report, pages 49-51.

Kani with their eyes shut, and, when they are near it, are 796
directed to open them and look at it. It is taken from house
to house for the benefit of the poor. The *káranavan* of the [618]
family gives small presents of money to the children, servants,
and tenants. It is also the time honoured custom of the State [431]
that on this day the chief officials shall pay their respects to His
Highness the Raja at his residence at Tripunattura, and receive
presents of varying amounts. In former times, it was customary for all the subjects of the ruling princes to pay their
respects to their royal masters with some new year's gifts.
This custom has disappeared, and in its place small presents [431]
are made by tenants and dependents to their landlords which [178]
generally consist of cocoanut, plantains, and other curry-stuffs
—intended probably as a contribution to the celebration. The [574]
day is marked by a grand feast for the members of the household as well as for the tenants and other dependents. To the [431]
Pulayans (the family workmen) are given paddy or rice, oil,
etc. , on the previous day to enable them to have their own
celebrations.

(4). The *Dasara* or *Ayutha Puja*, called also as *Saraswati Puja*, falls in Kanni (September-October) at the autumnal
equinox. It is a festival observed in honour of the Goddess [776]
Saraswati, and every man worships on the last day the implements of his craft and keeps the day a holiday. It is a nine day's festival and is called *Navaratri*.

(5). *Sivaratri*, which falls in Kumbham (February-March), is also an important festival which is observed in common with the members of other higher castes.

Important local festivals.—Of the festivals connected with 796
the temples of the State, the most important is the cock-festi- 184
val (Bharani) at the Cranganore Kali temple, an account of
which is given in my notes on the Valans.[1]

In addition to the *Utsavams* (festivals) held once a year in all important temples in the State, there are other popular festivals such as the *Pūrams* at Arattupuzha and Trichur, and the *Kongapada* at Chittur. A short account of the latter is given in the following pages.

The Kongapada festival of Chittur.

The name signifies 'war with Kongan'. The festival falls on the Monday succeeding the Wednesday which immediately follows the new moon in the month of Kumbham (February-March) every year. It will

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[1] Vide Vol. I, page 278.

764
[804] is performed. All the members of the family take part in this
[793] ceremony under the direction of the priest who belongs to the *Athikurussi* class. The ceremony consists in filling up three
[564] *para* measures with paddy and one *edangali* of raw rice, and placing them near the corpse together with a burning lamp of local manufacture.

[351] A mango tree is cut, and as much fuel as is necessary for the burning of the dead is collected and placed at the south-eastern corner of the compound which is always set apart for the burning or burial of the dead. A small pit about the size of the dead body is dug. Across this are placed three long stumps of the plantain tree, one at each end and one in the middle, and on these the foundation of the pyre is laid. The dead body which is placed on a bamboo bier is carried to the cremation ground and placed on the pyre with its head to the south, then fuel is laid over it, together with a little camphor,
● 613 sandal-wood and ghee, if the family can afford the expense. Be-
764 fore the body is placed on the pyre, the *anandaravan*, the member of the family immediately junior to the deceased, tears from the new cloths laid on the corpse, a piece sufficient to go round his own loins. He wears it round his waist and holds in his hand or tucks into his cloth at the waist, a piece of iron, generally a long key. It must be noted here, that all those members of the family who are older than the deceased may not take any part whatsoever in the funeral ceremony or in any subsequent ceremony after the cremation or burial, but all adult males junior to the deceased should be present when the
[593] pyre is lighted. The deceased's younger brother, or in his absence, his nephew (sister's son), sets fire to the pyre
[604] beginning at the head of the corpse; but if a son is left by the deceased, he sets fire to the pyre beginning at the feet. In the case of a woman, the son has to set fire to the pyre, or in his absence, one junior in age to her has the right to do so. It is a matter of great importance that the whole pyre should burn at once, and great care towards that end is taken. While the corpse is being consumed, all the members of the family go and bathe in a tank (there is always one in the compound of a Nayar house). The eldest man who has the piece of cloth and the key carries a pot of water, and all return to the place of cremation. When the body is almost consumed by fire, the senior member carries the pot of water thrice round it, letting

the water leak out by making holes in the pot as he walks 613
round. On completing the third round he dashes the pot on 764
the ground close to the spot where the head of the dead had been placed. This circling round (*Kumbhapradakshinam*) is said to symbolize that the deceased has had his ablution in the water of the Ganges. Then the chief mourner and others bathe in a tank or river, perform an ablution of water (*Udakakriya*) to a piece of *karuka* grass stuck up to represent the spirit of the dead. A small image of the deceased is then made [532]
out of raw rice, and to this image a few grains of rice and gingelly seed are offered. When this has been done, the relatives and the neighbours who have been there depart, taking care to bathe themselves before entering their houses.

The ceremony next in importance is the *Séshakriya* (mak- 765
ing offerings to the deceased's spirit) which begins on the 782
second day after death and continues for seven days, the parti- 613
culars of which are as follows:—All the male members of the family, junior to the deceased, bathe and return home. The eldest of them who has the torn cloth and the piece of iron, together with the others, assemble in the central court-yard of the house, where there has been prepared by their *enangan* Chithayan, some boiled rice, a few gingelly seeds, a few leaves of the *cherula*, some curd, and a small measure of paddy, rice, and turmeric. All these are placed in the north-east corner with a lamp locally made. A piece of palmyra leaf, about a foot or so in length and the width of a finger is taken, one end after being knotted, is placed in the ground, and the long end is left sticking up. This leaf represents the deceased, and the rice and other things are offered to it. The following is the 824
belief concerning the use of the palmyra leaf:—There are in 826
the human body ten humours, *Váyus, Pránan, Apánan, Sa-* 764
mánan, Udánan, Vyánan, Nágan, Kúrman, Krikalan, Déva- 774
dathan and *Dhananjayan.* There are *Desavayus* or ten airs. When cremation was performed for the first time, all excepting the last were consumed in the fire, while the last flew up and settled on a palmyra leaf. This was discovered by some Brah- [789]
man sages, who by means of *mantrams* forced it into the [775]
palmyra leaf. So it is thought that by making offerings to this leaf for seven days, the spirit of the deceased will be pacified. 782

The place where the leaf is to be fixed is first cleaned care- 824
fully, and the leaf is then placed in the centre of the prepared 765
613

824
765 surface. The men, when they return from their baths, bring
782 with them some harialli grass (*karukapullu*); and making an
● 613 obeisance with the right knee on the ground, they spread some grass near the strip of palmyra leaf, and rings made of the leaf are also worn by all those present. The eldest of the *anandaravans* or nephew then makes offerings of water, turmeric and leaves of the *cherula*, as well as balls of boiled rice with a few gingelly grains and curds poured over it. As boys are forbidden to make the offerings, should the nephew chance to be a boy, it is considered sufficient for him to touch one of the elders who, under those circumstances, makes the offerings. The whole is then covered with a plantain leaf, a lighted wick is waved near it, and some milk is poured under the leaf. This is left undisturbed for some seconds, after which the leaf is tapped gently with the back of the fingers of the right hand; it is then removed and torn in two at its mid-rib, one piece being placed on either side of the *pindams*. And now the ceremony is over for the day. The agnates rise and remove their wet clothing, sometimes even bathe again. The torn cloth is tied round a pillar near the basket covering the leaf, and the leaf is uncovered every day for seven days at the same hour for the performance of the ceremony. At the end of each day's ceremony the offerings of rice balls left are unguarded for a short time to allow the crows to feed on them; after which they are removed by the female members of the *tarawád*, who are junior to the deceased, and the eldest of them carries the offerings to the side of a tank
[825] and throws them into the water. It is believed that if the
[775] crows take them, the spirit is pleased. Should the crows leave
[231] any remains, they must be thrown into the water, as dogs must not eat the offerings.

During the seven days the house of the deceased and all
765 its inmates are considered to be under pollution, and the mem-
783 bers of that *tarawád* may not go to any other house nor can
613 members of other *tarawáds* visit them without polluting them-
574 selves; but this pollution can be removed by bathing. During this period, however, as a rule, the *káranavan* of the family receives visits of condolence from relatives and friends to whom he is at home on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Here it must be said, that in some cases, the visitors bring with them small presents in money or in kind to help the *káranavan* with the expenditure to which the funeral rites put him.

On the third day after the death, all those who are related to 765
the *tarawad* by matrimonial alliances combine and give a feast 613
to the inmates of the house and to the neighbours. This is
called the ***Patni kanji***. On the seventh day a return feast is
given by the members of the *tarawad*, to all relations and
neighbours. Between the seventh and the fourteenth day after
death, no ceremonies are performed, but the members of the
family are under pollution, and then on the fourteenth day comes
the ***Sanchayanam***. It is the disposal of the calcined remains,
the ashes of the deceased. The male members of the *tarawad*
go to the place of cremation, and picking up the unburnt bones
of the deceased, place them in an earthern pot which is sun-dried—not
burnt in the usual way—and cover up the mouth of
the pot with a piece of cloth. The eldest carries it and, followed
by the rest, proceeds to the nearest river (it must be a running
stream) into which it is thrown. In some places the bones [778]
are collected on the seventh and preserved in a pot which,
when convenient, is carried to Benares, Rameswaram, Gaya, or
to Thirunelly in Wynad and there deposited as above described.
Such a disposal is called ***Ashtagaya-Sradham***, and puts an end
to the need of all earthly ceremonies—nor is there any need to
continue the annual ceremony for that person. The belief is [775]
that the collection and careful disposal of the ashes of the dead
gives peace to the departed spirit, which will not thereafter
injure the living members of the *tarawad*.

On the fifteenth day is the purificatory ceremony at which 765
a man of the ***Attikurissi*** clan officiates as priest. In the morning 783
the members of the family wear cloths washed by a ***Vélan*** 613
(washerman) and assemble together for purification by the Nayar 793
priest who throws on them, both before and after bathing,
paddy, rice, gingelly seeds, and the holy mixture (milk, oil, etc.).
The Elayad or the Brahman priest performs the ***Punyáham*** or
purification of the house, well, etc., and on the sixteenth day he
takes the place of the priest. On the evening of the fifteenth day [431]
and the morning of the sixteenth, the priests and the villagers are
sumptuously fed, and presents of cloth are made to the latter
and money to the former. In the Chittur Taluk, the priestly [604]
functions are sometimes performed by the Elayad, and ***Deeksha*** [593]
(leaving the body unshaved for forty-one days or a year) is observed 765
by the nephew and the son of the deceased. The one
who is under this mark of mourning makes offerings of rice balls 613
[782]

765
613 and gingelly seeds every morning after his bath to the departed
[782] spirit, and he must abstain from women, meat, alcoholic drinks,
and from chewing betel and tobacco. When the *Deeksha* is
observed, the ashes of the dead are not deposited as described
above until the last day of *Deeksha*, the forty-first or the 365th
day after death. When *Deeksha* is observed for a year, the
ceremony called *bali* is performed every day. The last day of
Deeksha is one of festivity, and after *bali*, the man under *Deeksha*
769 is shaved. Then at the end of every year, the annual *Sradha*
[782] or the commemorative rite is performed for the deceased.
Rice ball offerings are made and given to the crows, when
[825] clapping of hands announces to these birds that the rice is
being thrown for them, and should they come and eat it, it is
considered that the spirit of the deceased is pleased with the
[613] offering and is not likely to be troublesome. But, on the other
hand, should they not come and eat it, it is evident that the
spirit is displeased and the *tarawád* had better be on the look
766 out. In the case of those who have committed suicide or met
death by violent means, the spirits are always particularly
775 vicious and troublesome to the *tarawád*, invariably rendering
613 miserable some unfortunate member of it. Unless the spirits
782 are pacified, they will ruin the family, so a Brahman priest is
invited to satisfy them by means of *Tilahómam*, a rite in
which sacrificial fire is raised, and ghee and gingelly seeds
are among the offerings.

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Nayar

[p. 17]

The Nayar Family in a Disintegrating Matrilineal System[1]

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Introduction

IN this short essay, I will present one case of the disintegration of a Nayar *tarwad* (matrilineal joint family), based on the materials collected by myself. 121

The general institutional system of a traditional Nayar *tarwad* is already well known, and has been much discussed recently by anthropologists, including K. Gough.[2] Here I state it briefly as a preface to the main discussion. A traditional Nayar *tarwad* was a property group consisting of a matrilineal lineage exclusively, headed and represented by the senior male member, called *karanavan*. Normally the members of a *tarwad* formed a distinguishable domestic unit. Spouses of the members of a *tarwad* resided in the *tarwad* where they were born, and a husband visited his wife at her *tarwad* at night and returned early morning.[3] The father had no duty or obligation on his own children, instead, the *karanavan* was the legal guardian of the offspring of the female members of the *tarwad*. 613 ● [591] [593] [429]

The Nayars are one of the Hindu upper castes in Kerala, next to the Nambudri Brahman, and traditionally the majority of the Nayars had been land holders or managers, not cultivators. On such a social and economic base, the function of the *tarwad* had been maintained. Various factors have led to the disintegration of the *tarwad* system, the major cause of which, I think, was the economic changes accompanied by modernization since the beginning of the 613 182 [564] [471]

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[1] This essay is one of the outcomes of my field work on matrilineal systems in India (1955–56) carried out by the generous grant of the Elin Wagner Foundation in Sweden, to which my profound acknowledgement goes. Also I am very thankful for the help of Dr. John Mogey. [114] [122]

[2] E. Kathleen Gough: "Changing kinship usages in the setting of political and economic change among the Nayars of Malabar," *J. R. Anthrop. Inst.* 82, pp. 71–87; "A comparison of incest prohibitions and the rules of exogamy in three matrilineal groups of the Marabal," *International Achives of Ethnography*, Vol. XLVI, Part I, 1952, pp. 82–105. [113]

[3] The *karanavan* was an exception: he could take his wife and children in his *tarwad*. In North Malabar, not only the *karanavan*, but also other male members used to take their wives and children to their *tarwad*. However, these wives, including children, had to leave their husband's *tarwad*, as soon as their husband died.

● 613 182 [127] [656] [121] 19th century. In this connection, I was much interested in studying court records and various documents, including *the Nayar Regulation II, 1925, Travancore*, and *the Malabar Marumakkathayam Act of 1933*, which legally marked the end of the functional Nayar *tarwad* system. Actual partition of an individual *tarwad* occured earlier, or later, than these acts.[1] However the present discussion is concerned mainly with the internal situation of the *tarwad* as it disintegrated, the discussion of external factors and causes of the disintegration of the *tarwad* are omitted.

The process of the disintegration of the *tarwad* can be summarized in terms of the essential elements which constitute the functional body of a *tarwad:*

A. members of a matrilinial lineage exclusively
B. co-residential (domestic) unit
C. property owning unit
D. headed by the *karanavan*
E. Ceremonial unit.

613 182 591 In the disintegration of the *tarwad*, the group loses these elements gradually. The element which is lost first seems to be *B*. A population which exceeds the limit of the accomodation of a *tarwad* building, results in residential separation of small segments of a matrilineal group who have the same grandmother, or grand-grandmother, called *tawari*. Such a group, residing in a separate household, in the course of time tends to develop as a temporal economic unit. Though the ancestral property is held in common by all members of the *tarwad* together, the residential sub-group would become a semi-independent productive and consumption unit: the income would not be pooled into the *tarwad* but consumed by the members of each group. Hence the function of the *karanavan* as the head of the *tarwad*, the property group, becomes incomplete.

613 182 [611] At the same time, when the residential unit becomes smaller, it would give chances for the inclusion of spouses and the element A would be shaken. The cohabitation of wife and husband leads to the inclusion of nonmatrilineal members in a matrilineal residential group. These factors bring on economic and psychological confusion in the duties and obligations of a *tarwad* member. Thus, by the destruction of elements *A*, *B*, and *C*, the status of the *karanavan* [578] becomes ambiguous. There occur various disputes between the *karanavan* and other members on the rights of the *tarwad* property.

[434] [594] This situation is enhanced by the fact that an increase of members who have an independent income without depending on the *tarwad* property, form an independent household with his wife and children. This situation makes it difficult to maintain the *tarwad* as a property unit, and also infringes the function of the *karanavan*. In fact the actual contribution of the father who was not the legal guardian of his children is significant in the failure of the role of the *karanavan* for the matrilineal members. Thus at last a *tarwad* has no alternative

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[113] [1] A report of my study on these legal documents, including materials given in this paper, was published in Japanese: "On the disintegration of the Nayar *tarwad*," *Memoirs of the Institute for Oriental Culture*, University of Tokyo, Vol. 14, pp. 1–131, 1958.

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Nayar

except to cease to function, and to divide the *tarwad* property among individual 613
members. Theoretically the loss of the elements *A*, *B*, *C* and *D* marks the end 182
of the *tarwad* institution. Nevertheless, the *tarwad* is still conceptualized as a
distinctive social and ceremonial group by the element *E*, in spite of the loss
of all other elements.

In 1956 (March-June) when I studied the Nayar, most of the *tarwad* in [114]
Kerala had already ceased to exist as a functional body. In a large building
named *tarwad* where once lived more than fifty members of a matrilineal family, 613
I found only a few members: such as an old mother and her daughter with her
husband and children. The members of each *tarwad* were dispersed, forming 594
independent small households each with a spouse and children, having already 182
partitioned the *tarwad* property. Many of the older generation who are aged
fifty and the head (father) of the household consisting of an elementary family,
were born in a *tarwad*, and had experiences of the *tarwad* life. They are the people
who lived through the dramatic stage of the disintegration of the *tarwad*. Their
life history itself reflects the great changes in the Nayar matrilineal system.

It is extremely interesting to study through these living members the process, 613
by which the members of a *tarwad* organized on a strict matrilineal principle, 182
without allowing cohabitation of husband and wife, gradually reorganized into
many individual elementary families in the course of half a century. The
disintegration of the Nayar system as a whole took about two centuries but it
seems that the actual disintegration of an individual *tarwad* is about half a
century. The following discussion deals with how individual members acted at
various stages of the disintegration of the *tarwad;* and what the changes of the
matrilineal system actually mean to those individuals who are involved; and
what are the consequences of the disintegration of the *tarwad*.

Marayil Tarwad

The *tarwad* which I have chosen for study is named Marayil, and one of the 613
Nayar *tarwad* in Ernaklum, Cochin. This *tarwad* had many advantages for my 121
purposes. The majority of the members of the *tarwad*, who now form many
different households, still reside near each other, within the thirty minutes walk.
The number of the descendants of the foundress of the *tarwad* amounts to 94 [162]
altogether in May 1956, ranging through seven generations. Many *tarwad* were
much bigger in numbers, and deeper in generations, than this. Another 613
advantage is that it represents a *tarwad* of a typical upper middle class among the 564
Nayar caste in this area: present occupations of these members are government
officials, advocates, teachers, etc. They have very friendly relationships with 121
many other Nayars in this area, and are thought of as respectable people. The [628]
husbands, at every generation, are all Nayars, without a single case of a marriage [582]
with a Nambudri Brahman, as is common among the upper class Nayar in this
area, nor with a Irawa, the caste below the Nayar.

Marayil *tarwad* was founded around 1830. The first partition by which the

[text continues on p. 21]

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[Marayil Tarwad]

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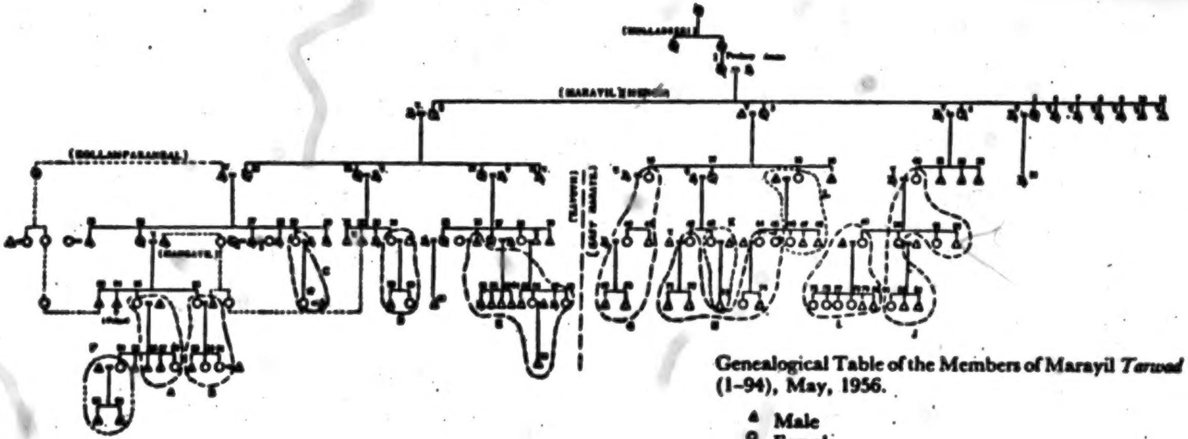
● 613
594



Genealogical Table of the Members of Marayil *Tarwad* (1–94), May, 1956.

- ▲ Male
- ○ Female
- ▲● Dead
- ▲' Husbands who practised a visiting marriage
- ▲ Husband who established his own household with his wife and children
- ◯ Independent household; households of F, K and L are not in Ernaklam.

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Nayar

[Marayil Tarwad]

Marayil tarwad was founded around 1830. The first partition by which the
tarwad split into two residential groups (Marayil and East Marayil), occurred in 613
1898, and the final partition of the property by individual members was in 1944. 182

In May 1956 the living members of the *tarwad* were grouped into ten different
households (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, and J of the Diagram); the male 613
members who are not included in these groups formed each household with 594
wife and children. The relationships of these households show that the degree 182
of familiarity is paralleled with the genealogical distance as well as geographical
distance. According to my own observations, the following different stages of
the matrilineal group consciousness were noticeable. 182

First, the strong coherence of matrilineal members, appear in the groups 613
consisting of the members of A, B, and C, and that of D and E. The members 621
of each group meet almost every day; their daily life gives an impression as if 594
they were still carrying on the *tarwad* life. For example, when one household is [594]
visited by a guest, others are usually called to join the talking, and often enjoy
tea and meals together. In fact, the households of each group are direct neighbours of each other.

Secondly, the group whose members have the same grand-grandmother 613
(consisting of A-B-C and D-C together) is distinguished by the amount of contact 621
of its members with each other, against other members. They meet at least two
or three times a week. The third level of group consciousness appears in the 574
group consisting of all descendants of the foundress, including both Marayil and 182
East Marayil. If necessary, they visit each other; if they pass near a house of the group, they are ready to visit. The manner of speaking is a bit more formal than that of first and second groups. However this is distinguished as the ceremonial unit. Though they lost the function of the property group (Mudal Sambantham), they maintain strongly the function of the ceremonial group (Pula Sambantham); funerals, marriages and seasonal festivities are carried out by these members altogether. For this corporate unit, 32 (refer to the number of the Diagram) is acting as the head. This is indeed the last function which is left for the members of Marayil *tarwad*; it is the matrilineal lineage with the same history; all members clearly can trace their genealogical relations with each other.

Further than this range, there is no group consciousness, but these members 613
of Marayil *tarwad* observe exogamy from those members of Mullasseri, another 582
tarwad, from which Marayil had sprung. Though they cannot trace exact genealogical relationships, by the observation of exogamy, Mullasseri members are considered as matrilineal distant kin, sociologically different from other Nayars.

Disintegrating Process of Marayil Tarwad

Based on the information of the present members the Marayil was founded 613
by Prabaty Amma (*I*). The process of the foundation of this *tarwad* is as follows: 173

[Marayil Tarwad]

> 613 173 The story goes back to the early 19th century. Prabaty Amma who came to visit a temple in Ernaklum, met a young Nayar man. Soon after they were fallen in love, and married. The name of this young man was Narayana Panikkar, who was a district officer in Palgat, and later became the *karanavan* of his *tarwad*. By the right of the *karanavan*, he took his wife to his *tarwad*.
>
> 613 173 591 968 Thirty years after their marriage, Narayana Panikkar died. According to the law of the Nayar, his wife and children had to leave from his *tarwad* at the moment of his death. Prabaty Amma accompanied with her children left his *tarwad*, but she did not return to her natal *tarwad*, Mullasseri. Instead, she decided to reside in the house which had been built by her husband for her as a gift. She named this *tarwad* Marayil, thus she and her children became independent from Mullasseri *tarwad*. It was said in this time, her mother's *tarwad*, Mullasseri, was so full with her matrilineal kin, hence she preferred to reside in this new house with her sons and daughters. This house is at present occupied by E. group. At the establishment of this new *tarwad*, I think, she must have had some land, or managing rights in farming land, given by her natal *tarwad* or by her husband as a gift, but I failed to discover the economic basis on which this *tarwad* life had been carried on.

613 175 Thus established, the new *tarwad* grew bigger in the course of time. In 1898, the increase of its members led to the first residential partition into two groups, as already stated. It was twenty years after the marriage of the granddaughter of Prabaty Amma, *12* and her daughter *29* who was born in 1888, was ten years old, and *39* is said to have been born in this *tarwad* around this year. From these data, it can be assumed that all members from *1* to *39* of Marayil *tarwad* lived in this *tarwad* building together. The situation of the members of this old *tarwad* before the partition in 1898 is as follows.

613 591 593 182 175 Married members of this *tarwad* mostly practiced "visiting marriage" (see Diagram, the majority of male members were visiting husbands). Seventeen out of twenty-three cases of marriages in the second and the third generations, took a visiting form. Five cases who did not practice "visiging marriage" were younger ones of the third generation, whose ages are almost equal to those of the older members of the fourth generation. In the fourth generation, the cases of the visiting marriages decreased to four out of nineteen cases. These facts reveal that the residential pattern became more neolocal than duolocal during the fourth generation: by this time many had already established independent households in which they lived with their wife and children, having an independent income. These members are shown by ▲ in the Diagram.

A more careful examination of this Diagram, reveals that this tendency had already started in the third generation, as appeared in the case of the husband of *12*, Nando Pillai. He had used to visit his wife for twenty years after his marriage. He was a brilliant and successful man who had an important post in the palace of the Cochin Maharaja, which allowed him to accumulate considerable wealth. He made a new *tarwad* building for his sisters as their *karanavan*, and again in 1898 he built a new beautiful *tarwad* with a big garden, where he himself lived with his wife and children, thus making his wife independent from her *tarwad*. This house is at present occupied by the C group.

613 591 175 182 Then Marayil *tarwad* already suffering from over population, stimulated by this event, split into two groups: one was the *tawari* of eldest daughter of Prabaty Amma, another was that of the second and third daughters. The latter

[Marayil Tarwad]

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group was named "East Marayil," while the former retained the original name 591
"Marayil." The property was not entirely divided, but managed independently. 175
The group of East Marayil shifted their residence to one mile east of the original one. 182

After the first partition, in the new Marayil group where I concentrated my [421]
study, the *karanavan* was at this time *15*. Among the members of this group, *12*
and her sons and daughters had a separate residence built by her husband,
Nando Pillai, and supported by him without help from her *tarwad*. It seems to [594]
have been already customary in this period among those Nayars who had a
considerable individual income, to establish an independent household for their
elementary families, as in the case of Nando Pillai. By these men a new type of
family came into being alongside the matrilineal joint family.

Nevertheless, it was to take a long time for the establishment of such an 613
elementary family with a neolocal residence pattern among the majority of 591
the Nayars. As the next generation of this case shows, in spite of the paternal 594
activities of Nando Pillai, the family retained its matrilineal pattern. His eldest 175
daughter did not leave the house, and her husband practiced the traditional 182
visiting marriage; the second daughter *29* returned to this house after her husband, who was the *karanavan* of another *tarwad*, died. However, his sons left his house each establishing an independent house where they lived with their wives. As a result, the first and second daughters, with their children, occupied this house, which produced a very similar pattern to a traditional *tarwad*, except for the absence of married out male members.

Through this picture, we can see that the role of the husband/father lies in the establishment of a new segment of a matrilineal group, rather than in the establishing of a nonmatrilineal system. The basic framework of the Nayar system was still matrilineal in this stage. As the result, a *tarwad* or Nayar household was often occupied by some married female members and their children, though the total number of the matrilineal members decreased rapidly by marrying-out members.

The fact that husbands of *26* and *38* did practice visiting marriage might give an impression that they were very old fashioned in their time, but it is really the outcome of the residential situation in the transitional stage: for some of the female members, it was natural to remain in the vacant *tarwad*; and a husband might not have enough economic resources to establish a new house for his wife and children, or might be occupied by the work of his own *tarwad*.

Such a stage also introduced uxorilocal marriage which was new to the Nayar. A husband, instead of building a new house for his wife and children, used the vacant wife's *tarwad* or wife's house built by her father, and he supported his family largely by his own income, as in the cases of *25*, *34* and *53*. Therefore, even in such uxorilocal cases, paternal authority was well developed. When the *tarwad* was in full function, the Nayar never practiced uxorilocal residence, though there were cases of virilocal residence. Uxorilocal residence in this case is irrelevant to the matrilineal system: it came into the picture because of the disintegration of the matrilineal system. It should be treated as a different problem from the uxorilocal residential patterns of other matrilineal systems.

[Marayil Tarwad]

613 The increase in the establishment of paternal elementary families gradually
425 split the *tarwad* into pieces, lessening the function of the *tarwad*. This Marayil
175 *tarwad* finally divided its property between individual members in 1944, as did
182 many *tarwad* in this period. This was forty-seven years since the first partition
in 1898, and this period saw the disintegration of this *tarwad*.

613 The members of the fourth and fifth generations in the Diagram make up
the transitional period: they had the *karanavan* as the head of the *tarwad* and at
175 the same time they played a role of the husband/father as in a patrilineal family.
182 Their duties and obligations were transitional from those of the *karanavan* to
[593] those of the father. Though by law then the *karanavan* was the legal guardian of
the members of a *tarwad*, actually the father who lived with his children was
[429] already *de facto* guardian of his children. These individuals were pulled in their
obligations and duties between their matrilineal kin and their wives and children.
In fact they differentiated their roles according to the economic and residential circumstances in which they were involved, though the degree of differentiation differed from individual to individual.

613 When the fifth generation were in their youth, the *karanavan* of the *tarwad*
593 was *15*. According to the Nayar rule the duty of the fostering and educating
these members should be performed by *15*. However, in actuality among these
175 members, those who had been given a higher education by the *karanavan* were
182 sons of *13* and *14* (*31*, *32*, *33*, *36* and *39*), while that of the sons of *12* (*25*, *27*, *28*
and *30*) was given by their father. The latter's case is indeed the result of the father's economic ability and his affection towards his children whom he lived with. Yet this father, on the other hand, made also a considerable economic contribution to the members of his own *tarwad* as the *karanavan*. Thus such a man played the two roles of father and *karanavan* at the same time.

613 Such behaviour and contributions created ambivalent psychological
602 inclinations among his descendants through his wife as well as through his sisters.
For example, the descendants of *12* who live now partly on property left by
421 *12*'s husband, tend to complain that their grandfather's sisters' daughters who
175 live in the house built by *12*'s husband, are enjoying property left by their
182 grandfather. They said that "they are enjoying our grandfather's property," a
situation reasonable from the point of view of the working of the matrilineal system, since "our grandfather" is "their maternal uncle." Here we see an interesting fact that they think in terms of the father (grandfather): "the father (grandfather) is of ours." At the same time, they have a tendency to expect and depend on the economic help from *32* and *27*, who are their matrilineal kin. In fact *57* after the death of her father, was economically helped by *32* and (27), which she took for granted. Among these members at the transitional stage, a confusion of rights and obligations is obvious.

613 In such an unstable situation involving ambivalent elements, what gave
582 them a certain satisfaction or solution was cross-cousin marriage. The marriage
of *53*, whose wife is his classificatory cross-cousin brought satisfaction to both
175 matrilineal groups (Marayil and Kallamparanbal), because by this marriage
182 both parties would have a chance to enjoy, and exercise rights on, the property

left by *12*'s husband for the kingroups of both his wife and his sisters, since both 613 ●
inclined to demand rights on the property left by him to the other party. The 582
marriage of *56* also involved a similar situation for both members of Marayil 175
and Mangayil in order to enjoy the economic activity of *32*. 182

Traditionally the Nayar tended to marry among particular *tarwad* (not necessarily two), between which friendly relationships, expressed in terms of *enanger*, had been established. Hence many marriages fall into the category of the cross-cousin marriage. However, the above cited cases were obviously meant to solve the ambivalent economic situation arising from the disintegrating stage of the *tarwad* system; and so it was explained to me. The present younger [829]
generation strongly avoid cross-cousin marriage, as they think it is not good biologically. However, whether they dislike it or not, after the disintegration of the *tarwad* system the cross-cousin marriage itself is losing its social and economic function.

Matrilineal Elements in the Present Nayar Family

In spite of the final partition of the *tarwad* property, and the establishment 613
of elementary family households which made the *tarwad* functionless, the ideology 594
of the *tarwad* (matrilineal system) still persists in various aspects of the life of the 182
present Nayar.

In the new system, in theory, the husband established an independent house for himself and his wife, freed from both his *tarwad* and her *tarwad*, but it is interesting to observe that the house built by the husband is found near to his wife's *tarwad*, unless his job forced him to leave their birth place. The picture is that of a set of households whose wives are sisters, grouped in a certain area. For instance the husbands of *55* and *66* built their houses very near to that of the C group, which was built by the father of *29*: these three households are very close to each other, across narrow lanes and a garden. The behaviour of these members was described on page 21.

This might give an impression that women tend to attach to their matrilineal 613
members more than men do. However, men also have very close attachments 593
to their sisters, and are always ready to give moral and economic help to them,
in spite of living at a greater distance from them. It was the traditional custom 574
to marry a member of a *tarwad* situated in the same local area, since this was 182
certainly convenient for visiting marriage, and also owing to the inter *tarwad* political relationships. Hence husbands and their sisters easily can visit each other, even after residential separation. Such frequent visits among the members of the matrilineal group maintain great familiarity among them. So far as my own observation goes, a man who has considerable income helps his poorer sisters almost in a same way as he does his wife and children. They themselves say they have often trouble about which they should care for more, wife or sister. They told me, that today they were well aware that they should do their best for their wife and children with whom they live, but they also could not help loving and caring for their sisters and sisters' children very much.

613 This psychological pull towards matrilineal kin also applies to the wives.
593 When they decide an important matter they always ask their maternal uncle's
advice, as well as that of their husband. Even the younger generation have great
604 affection for, and a tendency to depend on, the mother's brothers almost in
182 the same way they do their father. Particularly, if the father dies, it is the mother's
brother who actually takes the responsibility. (See the case of *57*.

613 I think the function of matrilineal elements found in these relations is largely
591 supported by the fact that matrilineal members reside near each other, where
they can meet almost every day. Indeed the factors which are vital to the
182 destruction of matrilineal coherence are created by those members who established
their life with their wife and children in places geographically distant from the land of the Nayar, Kerala, such as New Delhi, Bombay or Calcutta, for example the members of F, K and L in Diagram. In earlier phases of a marriage, a man who has to reside very far away because of his job, usually leaves his wife in her mother's house (as the cases of *91*, *44* and *50*), but when his job becomes permanent and he has children, usually he takes his wife and children to his new place. In the course of time, these members tend to have less and less contact with their matrilineal kin at home, which naturally leads to social and economic distance from the latter.

Thus the dispersion of members in terms of geographical distance affects to the actual function of the matrilineal group. In fact I found that the style of talking about the members of F, K and L sounds considerably different from that used for the members who reside in the same locality. If geographical distance is within Kerala, it is a quite different matter from the case of outside
[844] Kerala: for example, a member of a matrilineal group in Ernaklum, resides at
Trivandrum. In such a case, wife certainly comes back to her mother's house for
[796] child birth, and the members come together at important ceremonial occasions
of the matrilineal group. Within Kerala, the land of Nayar, such activities are
taken for granted in the society.

613 A great geographical dispersion of the members results in the decrease of
the functional members of the matrilineal group centred on the *tarwad*, but on
591 the other hand, this local matrilineal group would increase its size by peripheral
602 members of non-matrilineal descendants: children of the matrilineal male
182 members including their wives. These children stand very close to their father's
matrilinineal kin, with whom their father keeps frequent contact. The children feel the matrilineal kin of their father equally important to that of the mother. When all matrilineal members lived in a *tarwad*, the children were aware of the *tarwad* members of their non-resident-father, recognizing them as an important affinal group *(tarwad)*. But I think the degree of familiarity towards these
[594] members greatly differs from that towards the matrilineal kin of the father with
whom they live. Today the actual importance of the father who is the authority
182 in the household, brings *his* matrilineal kin much closer to his children.

613 It is very interesting, I found, that in all households, the fathers of which
were the members of Marayil *tarwad*, an enlarged picture of Prabaty Amma,
602 the foundress of the *tarwad*, was placed at the centre of the guest room. Their
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children regard this picture of Prabaty Amma as that of their ancestress through 613
their father. It appears from this symbol, combined with the frequent visits of 602
their father's sisters and their children, that the father's matrilineal kin are 182
conceptualized as if they were that of the mother. This tendency is greater in the [353]
case of the wife and children of *32*, which I think largely derives from the fact that *32* is playing the role of the central figure of the Pula Sambantham of his matrilineal group, and that his wife is a member of Mangayil *tarwad*, which is one of the important and close affinal matrilineal groups to Marayil members: the mother's brother and brother of *32*'s wife also married with members of Marayil *26* and *56*.

In spite of the inclination of these children towards their father's matrilineal 613
group, and paternal authority being well established, they still maintain the 551
surname of the male members of their mother's matrilineal group.[1] In Trivan-
drum the Nayar said to me it depended on the individual free choice whether 182
one should take the father's surname or the mother's brother's: in fact, I found some of them taking their father's surname. However, among the Nayar in Ernaklum, all they are taking mother's brothers' surname and they are proud to do so.

The greater approach of the children to their father's matrilineal group 613
seems to me largely due to their father's important status in his matrilineal
group, the members of which live very near to him, combined with his dis- 554
tinguished economic activities, which make him maintain closer contact with 182
his matrilineal kin. For example, if *32* was not the central figure in his matrilineal group, and poor, and on the other hand his wife had a very wealthy uncle to help her now and then, his wife and children might have more attachment to their mother's matrilineal kin, rather than to the father's.

In such a transitional stage, including the earlier stage of the disintegration 613
of the *tarwad* as already discussed, a man has two orientations, to his matrilineal 554
group and to his elementary family. And a man stands balanced between the
two groups, differentiating his role according to the circumstances in which he 593
is involved. In this situation to decide a man's behaviour the given law 182
seems less effective than the actual situation in which an individual is involved. *36* who married and once resided in his wife's *tarwad*, later returned to his own *tarwad*, taking the role of a *karanavan* of his old *tarwad*. He said that he felt his need as a guardian for his sister's children, as there was no grown up male member
in this *tarwad* building; but he did not mind leaving his wife and grown-up [586]
daughters and sons behind. This case should be compared with the case of Nando Pillai who lived his later life with his wife and children, though he was the legal guardian *(karanavan)* of his *tarwad*.

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[1] Among Nayars, traditionally the surname is used for only male members of a *tarwad*, while female members are called by her maiden name, adding the term "Amma" instead of the surname, after their initiation ceremony. All male members of a *tarwad* share the same surname: for example, the surname of Marayil members is Menon. However, since the same surname is used by many *tarwad* among the Nayars, it does not necessarily indicate common descent lines.

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The observed ambivalent attitudes found in Nayar men during and after the disintegration of the *tarwad* system is very similar to that of many matrilineal peoples, where the system allows the cohabitation of husband and wife. There it is a characteristic feature that a man is placed in an ambivalent situation between the obligations and duties towards his own matrilineal kin and towards his wife and children. From this angle, the present Nayar still live in the matrilineal atmosphere. It is very interesting to speculate where Nayar system will go. How long does it take the Nayar to become free from a matrilineal ideology, the shadow of the *tarwad* life? Many of the present Nayar population have experiences of the *tarwad* life, so the real change might be expected in the next generation. However, even then, it seems to me it would not shift to a patrilineal system, though it could possibly take the patrinominal system with a kind of bilateral arrangement. Whatever it may be, I think the future of the Nayar family and kinship system presents one of the most interesting examples for its study of the effects of historical and economic changes on a kinship system; and how far this kinship ideology can persist.

Respect towards a superior, towards a god, towards a respected par-
ent, or towards the higher casteman, was always shown in Kerala by not 105
wearing anything in his presence above the waist, be one man or woman. 564
Basically, this has changed but little, the Nambudri Brahmin always 576
praying in his private temple with only a loin cloth on, the modern Tiya 291
factory girl now removing the blouse which she has taken to wearing
before some important personage of her kin group, so that her breasts
are exposed. What is a less frequent sight nowadays is Nayar, Tiya or
Kammalan women in the streets and on the roads without some cover-
ing over the upper parts of their bodies. Lower caste people, however,
Cherumas, Pulayas and aboriginals, being less affected by progress, are
still to be seen on the highways, their shapely bodies exposed from the
waist upwards.

A striking phenomenon in Kerala is the coexistence, even today, of 104
the two radically opposed systems of *marumakkathayam* (matriliny) and 105
of *makkathayam* (patriliny). In the first, children are born into their 564
mother's caste, while in the other they are born into their father's caste. 614
Inheritance is through the mother's brother in the first instance, and [611]
through the father in the second. The matrilineal people are grouped in [428]
matrilineal clans called *tarawads*, of which the senior male member,
the *karanavan*, is the recognized head; the patrilineal people have patri-
lineal clans called by the same name, *tarawad*, also with the senior male
as the *karanavan*, but at the same time, they observe descent through
the mother, and all are members of matrilineal descent groups known as
illams or *kiriyams*. While castes and, strictly speaking, subcastes are in [613]
principle endogamous, clans and lineages are definitely exogamous, mar- [587]
riage being matrilocal in the case of matrilineal people and patrilocal in [591]
the case of patrilineal people.[1]

Of the high castes, only the Nambudri Brahmins are *makkathayam*. [611]
They have patrilineal *gothras* or lineages which are exogamous, and [613]
patrilineal clans like *tarawads* which they, however, call *illams*. In olden [582]
days, only the eldest son could contract a regular marriage within his
caste, marriage being polygamous and patrilocal. The younger sons 105
were either expected to live as *brahmacharyas* (bachelor religious devo- 564
tees) or could cohabit with Nayar women in a form of union known as [588]
sambandham to which we shall revert in a moment. They were main- [463]
tained by their own efforts (they generally became cooks) and by a [582]
meagre allowance from the family *illam*. This has now been changed by [428]

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[1] I continue to make use of the terms *matrilocal* and *patrilocal* here, rather than *uxorilocal* and *virilocal* as still being perfectly adequate as they were for Ceylon previously.

564 or with one of the small sects coming between the
Brāhmans and the Nāyars. But she cannot under any
circumstances unite herself with a man of a clan, which
[264] is inferior to hers. Nor can she eat with those of a clan
inferior to her; a man may, and does without restriction.
564 Her children by an equal in race and not only in mere
651 social standing, but never those by one who is racially
● 613 inferior, belong to her taravād.* The children of the
inferior mothers are never brought into the taravād of
the superior fathers, *i.e.*, they are never brought into it
to belong to it, but they may live there. And, where
they do so, they cannot enter the taravād kitchen, or
touch the women while they are eating. Nor are they
allowed to touch their father's corpse. They may live
in the taravād under these and other disabilities, but
557 are never of it. The custom, which permits a man
564 to cohabit with a woman lower in the social scale than
831 himself, and prohibits a woman from exercising the
same liberty, is called the rule of anulōmam and pratilōmam. Dr. Gundert derives anulōmam from anu, with
lōmam (rōmam), hair, or going with the hair or grain.
So pratilōmam means going against the hair or grain.
According to this usage, a Nāyar woman, consorting
with a man of a higher caste, follows the hair, purifies
the blood, and raises the progeny in social estimation.
558 By cohabitation with a man of a lower division (clan)
564 or caste, she is guilty of pratilōmam, and, if the
831 difference of caste were admittedly great, she would
be turned out of her family, to prevent the whole
564 family being boycotted. A corollary of this custom
851 is that a Nambūtiri Brāhman father cannot touch his
783 own children by his Nāyar consort without bathing

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* Tarwād or taravād, a marumakkathayam family, consisting of all the descendants in the female line of one common female ancestor.

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841 menstruation. While in her period, she may not eat or 783 drink with any other member of the taravād, and on the [613] fourth day she must be purified. Purification is known as māttu (change), and it is effected by the washerwoman, who, in some parts of South Malabar, is of the Mannān or Vannān caste, whose *métier* is to wash for the Nāyars and Nambūtiris, but who is, as a rule, the washerwoman of the Tīyan caste, giving her, after her bath, one of her own cloths to wear (māttu, change of raiment) instead of the soiled cloth, which she takes away to wash. Pollution, which may come through a death in the family, through child-birth, or menstruation, must be removed by māttu. Until it is done, the woman is out of caste. It must be done in the right way at the right moment, under pain of the most unpleasant social consequences. [689] How that the influential rural local magnate wreaks [613] vengeance on a taravād by preventing the right person giving māttu to the women is well known in Malabar. He could not, with all the sections of the Penal Code at his disposal, inflict greater injury. Now the Nāyar woman is said to feel compelled to remain in Malabar, or within her own part of it, in order to be within reach of māttu. My informant tells me that, the Vannān caste being peculiar to Malabar, the Nāyar women cannot go where these are not to be found, and that māttu must be done by one of that caste. But I know, from my own observation in the most truly conservative localities, in Kurumbranād for example, where the Nāyar has a relative superiority, that the washerman is as a rule a Tīyan; and I cannot but think that the interdiction 823 has other roots than those involved in māttu. It does 784 not account for the superstition against crossing water, 562 which has its counterparts elsewhere in the world. The origin of the interdiction to cross the river southwards

has been explained to me as emanating from a command 823
of the Kōlatirri Rājah in days gone by, when, the Arabs 784
having come to the country about Calicut, there was a 562
chance of the women being seized and taken as wives. The explanation is somewhat fanciful. The prohibition to cross the river to the northwards is supposed to have originated in much the same way. As bearing on this point, I may mention that the Nāyar women living to the east of Calicut cannot cross the river backwater, and
come into the town." It may be noted in this connection [776]
that the Paikāra river on the Nīlgiri hills is sacred to the [843]
Todas, and, for fear of mishap from arousing the wrath of the river-god, a pregnant Toda woman will not venture to cross it. No Toda will use the river water for any purpose, and they do not touch it, unless they have to ford it. They then walk through it, and, on reaching the opposite bank, bow their heads. Even when they walk over the Paikāra bridge, they take their hands out of the putkuli (body-cloth) as a mark of respect.

The complexity of the sub-divisions among the 564
Nāyars in North Malabar is made manifest by the following account thereof in the Gazetteer of Malabar.
"There are exogamous sub-divisions (perhaps corre- [613]
sponding to original tarwāds) called kulams, and these are grouped to form the sub-castes which are usually
endogamous. It is quite impossible to attempt a com- 564
plete account of the scheme, but to give some idea of its 634
nature one example may be taken, and dealt with in some detail; and for this purpose the portion of Kurumbranād
known as Payyanād will serve. This is the country [644]
between the Kōttapuzha and Pōrapuzha rivers, and is said to have been given by a Rāja of Kurumbranād to a certain Ambādi Kōvilagam Tamburātti (the stānam or title of the senior lady of the Zāmorin Rāja's family). In

578 invited to the girl's house at an auspicious hour appointed for the purpose, and, in the presence of friends and castemen, ties a tāli (marriage badge) round her neck, and goes away after receiving a certain fee for his trouble. [787] Among the other sects, the horoscope of the girl is examined along with those of her enangan (a recognised member of one's own class) families, and the boy whose horoscope is found to agree with hers is marked out as a fit person to tie the tāli, and a day is fixed for the tāli-tying ceremony by the astrologer, and information given to the Karanavan * (senior male in a tarwad) of the boy's family. The feast is called ayaniūnu; and the boy is thenceforth called Manavālan or Pillai (bridegroom). From the house in which the Manavālan is entertained a procession is formed, preceded by men with swords, and [613] shields shouting a kind of war-cry. In the meantime a procession starts from the girl's house, with similar men and cries, and headed by a member of her tarwad, to meet the other procession, and, after meeting the Manavālan, he escorts him to the girl's house. After entering the booth erected for the purpose, he is conducted to a seat of honour, and his feet are washed by the brother of the girl, who receives a pair of cloths. The Manavālan is then taken to the centre of the booth, where bamboo mats, carpets and white cloths are spread, and seated there. The brother of the girl then carries her from inside the house, and, after going round the booth three times, places her at the left side of the Manavālan. The father of the girl then presents new cloths tied in a kambli (blanket) to the pair, and with this [613] new cloth (called manthravadi) they change their dress. [564] The wife of the Karanavan of the girl's tarwad, if she be

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* The rights and obligations of Karanavans are fully dealt with by Moore, Malabar Law and Custom, 3rd edition, 1905.

of the same caste, then decorates the girl by putting [613]
on anklets, etc. The purōhit (officiating priest) called [564]
Elayath (a low class of Brāhmans) then gives the tāli [793]
to the Mānavālan, and 'the family astrologer shouts [787]
muhurtham (auspicious hour), and the Manavālan,
putting his sword on the lap, ties the tāli round the
neck of the girl, who is then required to hold an
arrow and a looking-glass in her hand. In rich families [556]
a Brāhmani sings certain songs intended to bless the [533]
couple. In ordinary families who cannot procure her
presence, a Nāyar, versed in songs, performs the office.
The boy and girl are then carried by enangans to [783]
a decorated apartment in the inner part of the house,
where they are required to remain under a sort of pollution
for three days. On the fourth day they bathe in
some neighbouring tank (pond) or river, holding each
other's hands. After changing their clothes they come
home, preceded by a procession. Tom-toms (native [534]
drums) and elephants usually form part of the procession, [231]
and turmeric water is sprinkled. When they come
home, all doors of the house are shut, and the Manavālan is
required to force them open. He then enters the house,
and takes his seat in the northern wing thereof. The aunt
and female friends of the girl then approach, and give
sweetmeats to the couple. The girl then serves food to the [264]
boy, and, after taking their meal together from the same
leaf, they proceed to the booth, where a cloth is severed
into two parts, and each part given to the Manavālan
and girl separately in the presence of enangans and
friends. The severing of the cloth is supposed to [586]
constitute a divorce." "The tearing of the cloth," [184]
Mr. Fawcett writes, "is confined to South Malabar.
These are the essentials of the ceremony, an adjunct to [765]
which is that, in spite of the divorce, the girl observes

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178 Nāyars by divine law to administer to the lust of the 174 Nambūdris were disseminated abroad. The better [585] classes among the Nāyars revolted against the degrading custom thus established, and a custom sprang up, [613] especially in North Malabar, of making sambandham a more or less formal contract, approved and sanctioned by the karnavan (senior male) of the tarwad to which the lady belonged, and celebrated with elaborate 585 ceremony under the pudamuri form. That there was [174] nothing analogous to the pudamuri prevalent in Malabar from A.D. 1550 to 1800 may, I think, be fairly presumed from the absence of all allusion to it in the works of the various European writers." According to Act IV, Madras, 1896, sambandham means an alliance between a man and a woman, by reason of which they in accordance with the custom of the community to which they belong, or either of them belongs, cohabit or intend to cohabit as husband and wife.

Of sambandham the following account was given by Mr. Chandu Menon to the Malabar Marriage Commission. "The variations of the sambandham are the pudamuri, vastradānam, uzhamporukkuka, vitāram kayaruka, etc., which are local expressions hardly understood beyond the localities in which they are used, but there would be hardly a Malaiyāli who would not readily understand what is meant by sambandham tudanguga (to begin sambandham). The meaning of this phrase, which means to 'marry,' is understood throughout Kēraḷam in the same way, and there can be no ambiguity or mistake about it. It is thus found that sambandham is the principal word denoting marriage among marumakkatāyam [192] Nāyars. [Sambandhakāran is now the common term for [184] husband.] It will also be found, on a close and careful examination of facts, that the principal features of this

however, my experience that sambandham was rare 585 [181]
on the side of the man before twenty-seven." "The [582]
Karanavan," Mr. Rāman Menon writes, "and the women [584]
of his household choose the bride, and communicate their
choice to the intending bridegroom through a third
party; they may not, dare not speak personally to him
in the matter. He approves. The bride's people are [787]
informally consulted, and, if they agree, the astrologer is
sent for, and examines the horoscopes of both parties
to the intended union. As a matter of course these are
found to agree, and the astrologer fixes a day for the
sambandham ceremony. A few days before this takes
place, two or three women of the bridegroom's house visit
the bride, intimating beforehand that they are coming.
There they are well treated with food and sweetmeats,
and, when on the point of leaving, they inform the
senior female that the bridegroom (naming him) wishes
to have sambandham with . . . . (naming her), and
such and such a day is auspicious for the ceremony.
The proposal is accepted with pleasure, and the party
from the bridegroom's house returns home. Preparations
for feasting are made in the house of the bride, as
well as in that of the bridegroom on the appointed day.
To the former all relations are invited for the evening, 585
and to the latter a few friends who are much of the same 574
age as the bridegroom are invited to partake of food at
7 or 8 P.M., and accompany him to the bride's house.
After eating they escort him, servants carrying betel [431]
leaves (one or two hundred according to the means of the [613]
taravad), areca nuts and tobacco, to be given to the bride's
household, and which are distributed to the guests.
When the bride's house is far away, the bridegroom
makes his procession thither from a neighbouring house.
Arrived at the bride's house, they sit awhile, and are again [276]

585 served with food, after which they are conducted to a
574 room, where betel and other chewing stuff is placed on
[276] brass or silver plates called thālam. The chewing over,
sweetmeats are served, and then all go to the bridal
chamber, where the women of the house and others are
assembled with the bride, who, overcome with shyness,
585 hides herself behind the others. Here again the bridegroom
and his party go through more chewing, while they
chat with the women. After a while the men withdraw,
wishing the couple all happiness, and then the women,
departing one by one, leave the couple alone, one of
[431] them shutting the door from the outside. The Pattar
Brāhmans always collect on these occasions, and receive
small presents (dakshina) of two to four annas each, with
betel leaves and areca nuts from the bridegroom, and
sometimes from the bride. A few who are invited receive
their dakshina in the bridal chamber, the others outside.
[513] Those of the bridegroom's party who live far away are
given sleeping accommodation at the bride's house [in a
Nāyar house the sleeping rooms of the men and women
are at different ends of the house]. About daybreak
next morning the bridegroom leaves the house with his
party, leaving under his pillow 8, 16, 32, or 64 rupees,
according to his means, which are intended to cover
the expenses of the wife's household in connection
with the ceremony. The sambandham is now complete.
[591] The girl remains in her own taravad house, and her
● [613] husband visits her there, coming in the evening and
leaving next morning. A few days after the completion
[431] of the ceremony, the senior woman of the
[796] bridegroom's house sends some cloths, including pavu
mundu (superior cloths) and thorthu mundu (towels),
and some oil to the bride for her use for six months.
Every six months she does the same, and, at the Ōnam,

Vishu, and Thiruvathīra festivals, she sends besides a 585
little money, areca nuts, betel and tobacco. The money [431]
sent should be 4, 8, 16, 32, or 64 rupees. Higher sums [796]
are very rarely sent. Before long, the women of the
husband's house express a longing for the girl-wife to be 585
brought to their house, for they have not seen her yet. 574
Again the astrologer is requisitioned, and, on the day [787]
he fixes, two or three of the women go to the house of
the girl, or, as they call her, Ammāyi (uncle's wife).
They are well treated, and presently bring away the girl
with them. As she is about to enter the gate-house of
her husband's taravad, the stile of which she crosses right
leg first, two or three of the women meet her, bearing a
burning lamp and a brass plate (thālam), and precede
her to the nalukattu of the house. There she is seated [788]
on a mat, and a burning lamp, a nazhi (measure) of rice,
and some plantains are placed before her. One of the
younger women takes up a plantain, and puts a piece
of it in the Ammāyi's mouth ; a little ceremony called
madhuram tītal, or giving the sweets for eating. She [431]
lives in her husband's house for a few days, and is then
sent back to her own with presents, bracelets, rings or
cloths, which are gifts of the senior woman of the house.
After this she is at liberty to visit her husband's house
on any day, auspicious or inauspicious. In a big taravad, 613
where there are many women, the Ammāyi does not, as 596
a rule, get much sympathy and good-will in the house- 585
hold, and, if she happens to live temporarily in her [591]
husband's house, as is sometimes, though very rarely
the case in South Malabar, and to be the wife of the
Karanavan, it is observed that she gets more than her
share of whatever good things may be going. Hence
the proverb, 'Place Ammāyi Amma on a stone, and grind
her with another stone.' A sambandham ceremony at

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on her head, and lets it trickle down two or three hairs 843
to her navel, where it is caught in a plate. Then the 564
girl and her brother, holding hands, dig a hole with
the charakkōl and pisankatti, and plant the tamarind
branch in the nadumittam, and water it. Then the [782]
juice is administered. Until she is confined, the girl [824]
waters the tamarind branch, and offers rice, flowers,
and lighted wicks to it three times a day. When labour
begins, she uproots the branch."

"At delivery," Mr. Balakrishnan Nāyar writes, 844
"women of the barber caste officiate as midwives. In 564
some localities, this is performed by Vēlan caste women. 783
Pollution is observed for fifteen days, and every day the 846
mother wears cloths washed and presented by a woman [564]
of the Vannān [or Tīyan] caste. On the fifteenth day is
the purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pol- [764]
lution, a man of the Attikurissi clan sprinkles on the [825]
woman a liquid mixture of oil and the five products of [824]
the cow (pānchagavya), with gingelly (*Sesamum*) seeds.
Then the woman takes a plunge-bath, and sits on the
ground near the tank or river. Some woman of the
family, with a copper vessel in her hands, takes water
from the tank or river, and pours it on the mother's
head as many as twenty-one times. This done, she
again plunges in the water, from which she emerges
thoroughly purified. It may be noted that, before the
mother proceeds to purify herself, the new-born babe has
also to undergo a rite of purification. It is placed on
the bare floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few
drops of cold water on it, and takes it in his hands. The [828]
superstitious believe that the temperament of the child
is determined by that of the person who thus sprinkles
the water. All the members of the taravād observe [613]
pollution for fifteen days following the delivery, during

846 [613] which they are prohibited from entering temples and
holy places." It is noted by Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar
[844] that the first act done, when a male child is born, is to
[828] beat the earth with a cocoanut leaf, and, if the issue is a
female, to grind some turmeric in a mortar, with the
object, it is said, of removing the child's fear.

553 In connection with post-natal ceremonies, Mr. Bala-
[846] krishnan Nāyar writes further that "the twenty-seventh
[821] day after the child's birth, or the first recurring day of
the star under which it was born, marks the next impor-
[613] tant event. On this day, the Karanavan of the family
gives to the child a spoonful or two of milk mixed with
[574] sugar and slices of plantain. Then he names the child,
and calls it in the ear by the name three times. This
is followed by a feast to all friends and relatives, the
expenses of which are met by the father of the child.
852 With the Nāyar, every event is introduced by a cere-
853 monial. The first meal of rice (chorūn) partaken of
by the child forms no exception to the rule. It must be
remembered that the child is not fed on rice for some
time after birth, the practice being to give it flour of
dried plantain boiled with jaggery (crude sugar). There
is a particular variety of plantain, called kunnan, used for
this purpose. Rice is given to the child for the first
[787] time generally during the sixth month. The astrologer
fixes the day, and, at the auspicious hour, the child,
bathed and adorned with ornaments (which it is the
duty of the father to provide) is brought, and laid on a
plank. A plantain leaf is spread in front of it, and a
lighted brass lamp placed near. On the leaf are served
a small quantity of cooked rice—generally a portion of
the rice offered to some temple divinity—some tamarind,
salt, chillies, and sugar. [In some places all the curries,
etc., prepared for the attendant feast, are also served.]

Then the Karanavan, or the father, ceremoniously 852
approaches, and sits down facing the child. First he 853
puts in the mouth of the child a mixture of the tamarind, [613]
chillies and salt, then some rice, and lastly a little sugar.
Thenceforward the ordinary food of the child is rice.
It is usual on this occasion for relatives (and especially
the bandhus, such as the ammayi, or 'uncle's wife')
to adorn the child with gold bangles, rings and other
ornaments. The rice-giving ceremony is, in some cases,
preferably performed at some famous temple, that at
Guruvayūr being a favourite one for this purpose." It [782]
is noted by Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar that the rice- [553]
giving ceremony is usually performed by taking the
child to a neighbouring temple, and feeding it with the
meal offered to the deity as nivadiyam. In some places,
the child is named on the chorūn day.

Of ceremonies which take place in infancy and child- 852
hood, the following account is given in the Gazetteer of 846
Malabar. "On the fifth day after birth, a woman of the 564
Attikurissi or Mārayan caste among Nāyars, or of the
barber caste in the lower classes, is called in, and purifies
the mother, the other women of the household, and the
room in which the child was born, by lustration with milk
and gingelly oil, using karuga (*Cynodon Dactylon*) as a
sprinkler. Her perquisites are the usual niracchaveppu
(1 edangazhi of paddy and 1 nazhi of uncooked rice)
placed together with a lamp of five wicks in the room
to be cleansed, and a small sum in cash. A similar
purification ceremony on the 15th day concludes the
pollution period. In some cases, milk and cow's urine [386]
are sprinkled over the woman, and, after she has bathed, [824]
the Mārayan or Attikurissi waves over her and the
child two vessels, one containing water stained red
with turmeric and lime, and one water blackened with
Powdered charcoal.

are set forth with a plate, if possible of silver, containing 852
milk, honey, and bits of a sort of plantain called kunnan,
together with three jack leaves folded to serve as spoons.
The mother brings the child newly bathed, and places it 852
in his Karnavan's lap. The goldsmith is in attendance 613
with a string of five beads (mani or kuzhal) made of the [326]
panchaloham or five metals, gold, silver, iron, copper [823]
and lead, which the father ties round the baby's waist.
The Karnavan, or the mother, then administers a spoonful
of the contents of the plate to the child with each of
the jack leaves in turn. The father's sister, or other [853]
female relative, also administers some, and the Karnavan
then whispers the child's name thrice in its right ear.

"The name is not publicly announced till the Chōrunnu 553
or Annaprāsanam (rice giving), which takes place [787]
generally in the sixth month, and must be performed at
an auspicious moment prescribed by an astrologer. The
paraphernalia required are, besides the five-wicked lamp,
some plantain leaves on which are served rice and four
kinds of curry called kalan, olan, avil, and ericchakari,
some pappadams (wafers of flour and other ingredients),
plantains and sweetmeats called uppēri (plantains fried
in cocoanut oil). The mother brings the child newly 553
bathed, and wearing a cloth for the first time, and places 613
it in the Karnavan's lap. The father then ties round the
child's neck a gold ring, known as muhurta mothiram
(auspicious moment ring), and the relatives present give
the child other ornaments of gold or silver according to
their means, usually a nūl or neck-thread adorned with
one or more pendants, an arannal or girdle, a pair of
bangles, and a pair of anklets. The Karnavan then, [782]
after an oblation to Ganapathi, gives the child some
of the curry, and whispers its name in its right ear three
times. He then carries the child to a cocoanut tree

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613 near the house, round which he makes three pradakshinams, pouring water from a kindi round the foot of the tree as he does so. The procession then returns to the house, and on the way an old woman of the family proclaims the baby's name aloud for the first time in the form of a question, asking it 'Krishnan' (for instance), 'dost thou see the sky?' In some cases, the father simply calls out the name twice.

852 "The Vidyarambham ceremony to celebrate the
871 beginning of the child's education takes place in the fifth
[778] or seventh year. In some places, the child is first taken
to the temple, where some water sanctified by mantrams is poured over his head by the Shântikâran (officiating priest). The ceremony at the house is opened by Ganapathi pûja performed by an Ezhuttacchan, or by a
[782] Nambûdri, or another Nâyar. The Ezhuttacchan writes
on the child's tongue with a gold fanam (coin) the invocation to Ganapathi (Hari Sri Ganapathayi nama), or sometimes the fifty-one letters of the Malayalam alphabet, and then grasps the middle finger of the child's right hand, and with it traces the same letters in parched rice. He also gives the child an ola (strip of palm leaf) inscribed with them, and receives in return a small fee
[875] in cash. Next the child thrice touches first the
[576] Ezhuttacchan's feet, and then his own forehead with his
right hand, in token of that reverent submission to the teacher, which seems to have been the key-note of the old Hindu system of education.

304. "The Kâthukuttu or ear-boring is performed either at the same time as the Pâla-kudi or the Choulam, or at any time in the fifth or seventh year. The operator, who may be any one possessing the necessary skill, pierces first the right and then the left ear with two gold or silver wires brought by the goldsmith, or with karamullu

thorns. The wires or thorns are left in the ears. In 304
the case of girls, the hole is subsequently gradually [301]
distended by the insertion of nine different kinds of thorns or plugs in succession, the last of which is a bamboo plug, till it is large enough to admit the characteristic Malayāli ear ornament, the boss-shaped toda."

Of the death ceremonies among the Nāyars of Malabar, 763
the following detailed account is given by Mr. Fawcett. "When the dying person is about to embark for that [824]
bourne from which no traveller returns, and the breath is [823]
about to leave his body, the members of the household, and all friends who may be present, one by one, pour a little water, a few drops from a tiny cup made of a leaf or two of the tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), into his mouth, holding in the hand a piece of gold or a gold ring, the idea being that the person should touch gold ere it enters the mouth of the person who is dying. If the taravād is rich [613]
enough to afford it, a small gold coin (a rāsi fanam, if one can be procured) is placed in the mouth, and the lips are closed. As soon as death has taken place, the corpse is 764
removed from the cot or bed and carried to the vatakkini [824]
(a room in the northern end of the house), where it is placed on long plantain leaves spread out on the floor; and, while it is in the room, whether by day or night, a [613]
lamp is kept burning, and one member of the taravād holds the head in his lap, and another the feet in the same way; and here the neighbours come to take a farewell look at the dead. As the Malayālis believe [775]
that disposal of a corpse by cremation or burial as soon as possible after death is conducive to the happiness of the spirit of the departed, no time is lost in setting about the funeral. The bodies of senior members of [613]
the taravād, male or female, are burned, those of [766]
children under two are buried; so too are the bodies of all

764 persons who have died of cholera or small-pox. When
766 preparations for the funeral have been made, the corpse
351 is removed to the natumuttam or central yard of the house, if there is one (there always is in the larger houses); and, if there is not, is taken to the front yard, where it is again laid on plantain leaves. It is washed and anointed, the usual marks are made with sandal paste
764 and ashes as in life, and it is neatly clothed. There is
613 then done what is called the potavekkuka ceremony, or placing new cotton cloths (kōti mundu) over the corpse by the senior member of the deceased's taravād followed by all the other members, and also the sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and all relatives. These cloths are used for tying up the corpse, when being taken to
184 the place of burial or cremation. In some parts of Malabar, the corpse is carried on a bier made of fresh bamboos, tied up in these cloths, while in others it is carried, well covered in the cloths, by hand. In either case it is carried by the relatives. Before the corpse is removed, there is done another ceremony called pāra-
804 virakkuka, or filling up pāras. (A pāra is a measure
564 nearly as big as a gallon.) All adult male members of the taravād take part in it under the direction of a man of the Attikkurissi clan who occupies the position of director of the ceremonies during the next fifteen days, receiving as his perquisites all the rice and other offerings made to the deceased's spirit. It consists in filling up three pāra measures with paddy (unhusked rice), and one edangāli ($\frac{1}{10}$ of a pāra) with raw
782 rice. These offerings of paddy and rice are placed very near the corpse, together with a burning lamp of the kind commonly used in Malabar, called nela vilaku. If the taravād is rich enough to afford one, a silk cloth is placed over the corpse before its removal for cremation.

As much fuel as is necessary having been got ready at 764
the place of cremation, a small pit about the size of 613
the corpse is dug, and across this are placed three long
stumps of plantain tree, one at each end, and one in the
middle, on which as a foundation the pyre is laid. The [824]
whole, or at least a part of the wood used, should be
that of the mango tree. As the corpse is being removed
to the pyre, the senior Anandravan * who is next in age
(junior) to the deceased tears from one of the new cloths
laid on the corpse a piece sufficient to go round his
waist, ties it round his waist and holds in his hand, or
tucks into his cloth at the waist, a piece of iron, generally
a long key. This individual is throughout chief among [782]
the offerers of pindam (balls of rice) to the deceased. The [823]
corpse is laid on the bier with the head to the south,
with the fuel laid over it, and a little camphor, sandal-
wood and ghī (clarified butter); if these things are
within the means of the taravâd. Here must be stated [561]
the invariable rule that no member of the taravâd, male
or female, who is older than the deceased, shall take any
part whatever in the ceremony, or in any subsequent
ceremony following on the cremation or burial. All
adult males junior to the deceased should be present
when the pyre is lighted. The deceased's younger
brother, or, if there is none surviving, his nephew (his
sister's eldest son) sets fire to the pyre at the head of the
corpse. If the deceased left a son, this son sets fire at
the same time to the pyre at the feet of the corpse. In
the case of the deceased being a woman, her son sets fire
to the pyre ; failing a son, the next junior in age to her
has the right to do it. It is a matter of greatest

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* The eldest male member of the taravâd is called the Karanavan. All male members, brothers, nephews, and so on, who are junior to him, are called Anandravans of the taravâd.

764 importance that the whole pyre burns at once. The
613 greatest care is taken that it burns as a whole, consuming
every part of the corpse. While the corpse is being
consumed, all the members of the deceased's taravād who
carried it to the pyre go and bathe in a tank (there is
always one in the compound or grounds round every
Nāyar's house). The eldest, he who bears the piece of
torn cloth and iron (the key), carries an earthen pot of
water, and all return together to the place of cremation.
[763] It should be said that, on the news of a death, the
neighbours assemble, assisting in digging the grave,
preparing the pyre, and so on, and, while the members
of the taravād go and bathe, they remain near the
corpse. By the time the relatives return it is almost
consumed by the fire, and the senior Anandravan carries
the pot of water thrice round the pyre, letting the water
leak out by making holes in the pot as he walks round.
On completing the third round, he dashes the pot on
the ground close by where the head of the dead body has
been placed. A small image representing the deceased
is then made out of raw rice, and to this image a few
grains of rice and gingelly seeds are offered. When this
has been done, the relatives go home and the neighbours
depart, bathing before entering their houses. When the
764 cremation has been done by night, the duty of sēshakriya
782 (making offerings to the deceased's spirit) must be begun
775 the next day between 10 and 11 A.M., and is done on
613 seven consecutive days. In any case the time for this
ceremony is after 10 and before 11, and it continues for
seven days. It is performed as follows. All male
members of the taravād younger than the deceased go
together to a tank and bathe, *i.e.*, they souse themselves
in the water, and return to the house. The eldest of
them, the man who tore off the strip of cloth from

the corpse, has with him the same strip of cloth and 764
the piece of iron, and all assemble in the central 613
courtyard of the house, where there have been placed 782
ready by an enangan some rice which has been half 775
boiled, a few grains of gingelly, a few leaves of the cherūla (*Ærua lanata*), some curds, a smaller measure of paddy, and a smaller measure of raw rice. These are placed in the north-east corner with a lamp of the ordinary Malabar pattern. A piece of palmyra leaf, about a foot or so in length and the width of a finger, is taken, and one end of it is knotted. The knotted end is placed in the ground, and the long end is left sticking up. This represents the deceased. The rice and other things are offered to it. The belief concerning this piece of palmyra leaf is
explained thus. There are in the human body ten [826]
humours:—Vāyūs, Prānan, Apānan, Samānan, Udānan, [994]
Vyānan, Nāgan, Kurman, Krikalan, Dēvadattan, Dhananjayan. These are called Dasavāyu, *i.e.*, ten airs. When cremation was done for the first time, all these, excepting the last, were destroyed by the fire. The last one flew up, and settled on a palmyra leaf. Its existence was discovered by some Brāhman sages, who, by means of mantrams, forced it down to a piece of palmyra leaf on the earth. So it is thought that, by making offerings to this Dhananjayan leaf for seven days, the spirit of the deceased will be mollified, should he have any anger to vent on the living members of the taravād. The place where the piece of leaf is to be fixed has been carefully cleaned, and the leaf is fixed in the centre of the prepared surface. The offerings made to it go direct to the spirit of the deceased, and the peace of the taravād is assured. The men who have bathed and returned have brought with them some grass (karuka pulla), plucked on their way back to the house.

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They kneel in front of the piece of palmyra, with the right knee on the ground. Some of the grass is spread on the ground near the piece of leaf, and rings made with it are placed on the ring finger of the right hand by each one present. The first offerings consist of water, sandal paste, and leaves of the cherūla, the eldest of the Anandravans leading the way. Boys need not go through the actual performance of offerings; it suffices for them to touch the eldest as he is making the offerings. The half boiled rice is made into balls (pindam), and each one present takes one of these in his right hand, and places it on the grass near the piece of palmyra leaf. Some gingelly seeds are put into the curd, which is poured so as to make three rings round the pindams. It is poured out of a small cup made with the leaf on which the half-boiled rice had been placed. It should not be poured from any other kind of vessel. The whole is then covered with this same plantain leaf, a lighted wick is waved, and some milk is put under the leaf. It is undisturbed for some moments, and leaf is gently tapped with the back of the fingers of the right hand. The leaf is then removed, and torn in two at its midrib, one piece being placed on either side of the pindams. The ceremony is then over for the day. The performers rise, and remove the wet clothing they have been wearing. The eldest of the Anandravans should, it was omitted to mention, be kept somewhat separated from the other Anandravans while in the courtyard, and before the corpse is removed for cremation; a son-in-law or daughter-in-law, or some such kind of relation remaining, as it were, between him and them. He has had the piece of cloth torn from the covering of the corpse tied round his waist, and the piece of iron in the folds of his cloth, or stuck in his waist during the ceremony

which has just been described. Now, when it has been 764
completed, he ties the piece of cloth to the pillar of the 613
house nearest to the piece of palmyra leaf which has 782
been stuck in the ground, and puts the piece of iron in a 775
safe place. The piece of palmyra leaf is covered with
a basket. It is uncovered every day for seven days at
the same hour, while the same ceremony is repeated.
The balls of rice are removed by women and girls of the
taravād who are junior to the deceased. They place
them in the bell-metal vessel in which the rice was
boiled. The senior places the vessel on her head, and
leads the way to a tank, on the bank of which the rice
is thrown. It is hoped that crows will come and eat [825]
it; for, if they do, the impression is received that the
deceased's spirit is pleased with the offering. But, if
somehow it is thought that the crows will not come and
eat it, the rice is thrown into the tank. Dogs are not to
be allowed to eat it. The women bathe after the rice
has been thrown away. When the ceremony which has
been described has been performed for the seventh time,
i.e., on the seventh day after death, the piece of palmyra
leaf is removed from the ground, and thrown on the
ashes of the deceased at the place of cremation. During 765
these seven days, no member of the taravād goes to any 613
other house. The house of the dead, and all its inmates 783
are under pollution. No outsider enters it but under 574
ban of pollution, which is, however, removable by bathing.
A visitor entering the house of the dead during
these seven days must bathe before he can enter his own
house. During these seven days, the Karanavan of the
family receives visits of condolence from relatives and
friends to whom he is "at home" on Monday, Wednesday
or Saturday. They sit and chat, chew betel, and go
home, bathing ere they enter their houses. It is said

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613 that, in some parts of Malabar, the visitors bring with
574 them small presents in money or kind to help the
[783] Karanavan through the expenditure to which the funeral
rites necessarily put him. To hark back a little, it must
not be omitted that, on the third day after the death, all
those who are related by marriage to the taravād of the
deceased combine, and give a good feast to the inmates
of the house and to the neighbours who are invited, one
man or woman from each house. The person so invited
is expected to come. This feast is called patni karigi.
On the seventh day, a return feast will be given by the
taravād of the deceased to all relatives and neighbours.
Between the seventh and fourteenth day after death no
ceremony is observed, but the members of the taravād
remain under death pollution. On the fourteenth day
764 comes the sanchayanam. It is the disposal of the calcined
613 remains; the ashes of the deceased. The male
[415] members of the taravād go to the place of cremation,
and, picking up the pieces of unburnt bones which they
find there, place these in an earthen pot which has been
sun-dried (not burnt by fire in the usual way), cover
up the mouth of this pot with a piece of new cloth, and,
all following the eldest who carries it, proceed to the
nearest river (it must be running water), which receives
the remains of the dead. The men then bathe, and return
[184] home. In some parts of Malabar the bones are collected
[778] on the seventh day, but it is not orthodox to do so. Better
by far than taking the remains to the nearest river is it to
take them to some specially sacred place, Benares, Gaya,
Rameswaram, or even to some place of sanctity much
nearer home, as to Tirunelli in Wynaad, and there
764 dispose of them in the same manner. The bones or
769 ashes of any one having been taken to Gaya and there
613 deposited in the river, the survivors of the taravād have

no need to continue the annual ceremony for that person. 764
This is called ashtagaya srādh. It puts an end to the 613
need for all earthly ceremonial. It is believed that the [769]
collection and careful disposal of the ashes of the dead [775]
gives peace to his spirit, and, what is more important, [787]
the pacified spirit will not thereafter injure the living
members of the taravād, cause miscarriage to the women,
possess the men (as with an evil spirit), and so on. On 764
the fifteenth day after death is the purificatory ceremony. 613
Until this has been done, any one touched by any 783
member of the taravād should bathe before he enters
his house, or partakes of any food. A man of the [564]
Athikurisi clan officiates. He sprinkles milk oil, in
which some gingelly seeds have been put, over the
persons of those under pollution. This sprinkling, and
the bath which follows it, remove the death pollution.
The purifier receives a fixed remuneration for his offices [465]
on this occasion, as well as when there is a birth in the
taravād. In the case of death of a senior member of a 766
taravād, well-to-do and recognised as of some importance, 613
there is the feast called pinda atiyantaram on the 765
sixteenth day after death, given to the neighbours and 302
friends. With the observance of this feast of pindams
there is involved the dīksha, or leaving the entire body
unshaved for forty-one days, or for a year. There is no
variable limit between forty-one days or a year. The [184]
forty-one-day period is the rule in North Malabar. I
have seen many who were under the dīksha for a year.
He who lets his hair grow may be a son or nephew of
the deceased. One member only of the taravād bears 766
the mark of mourning by his growth of hair. He who 765
is under the dīksha offers half-boiled rice and gingelly 613
seeds to the spirits of the deceased every morning after [782]
his bath, and he is under restriction from women, from [784]
[834]

766
● 613 alcoholic drinks, and from chewing betel, also from
765 tobacco. When the dīksha is observed, the ashes of the
[784] dead are not deposited as described already (in the sun-
[834] dried vessel) until its last day—the forty-first or a year
after death. When it is carried on for a year, there is
observed every month a ceremony called bali. It is
noteworthy that, in this monthly ceremony and for the
conclusion of the dīksha, it is not the thirtieth or three
hundred and sixty-fifth day which marks the date for the
ceremonies, but it is the day (of the month) of the star
which was presiding when the deceased met his death:
the returning day on which the star presides.* For the
[564] bali, a man of the Elayatu caste officiates. The Elayatus
[793] are priests for the Nāyars. They wear the Brāhmin's
thread, but they are not Brāhmins. They are not
permitted to study the Vēdas, but to the Nāyars they
[782] stand in the place of the ordinary purōhit. The officiat-
ing Elayatu prepares the rice for the bali, when to
the deceased, represented by karuka grass, are offered
boiled rice, curds, gingelly seeds, and some other
[465] things. The Elayatu should be paid a rupee for his
services, which are considered necessary even when
the man under dīksha is himself familiar with the
[302] required ceremonial. The last day of the dīksha is one of
festivity. After the bali, the man under dīksha is shaved.
All this over, the only thing to be done for the deceased
is the annual srādh or yearly funeral commemorative rite.
[825] Rice-balls are made, and given to crows. Clapping of
[775] hands announces to these birds that the rice is being
thrown for them, and, should they not come at once and
eat, it is evident that the spirit is displeased, and the
taravād had better look out. The spirits of those who

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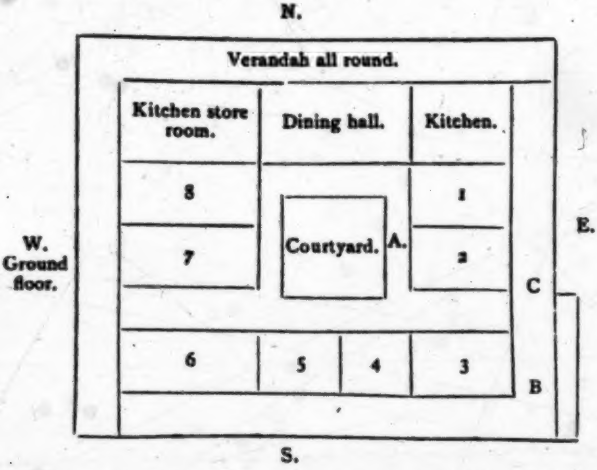
[805] * All caste Hindus who perform the srādh ceremonies calculate the day of death, not by the day of the month, but by the thithis (day after full or new moon).

The spirits of those who
have committed suicide, or met death by any violent 766
means, are always particularly vicious and troublesome 775
to the taravād, their spirits possessing and rendering
miserable some unfortunate member of it. Unless they [782]
are pacified, they will ruin the taravād, so Brāhman priests are called in, and appease them by means of tilahōmam, a rite in which sacrificial fire is raised, and ghī, gingelly, and other things are offered through it."

"There are," Mr. Fawcett writes, "many interesting 764
features in the death ceremonies as performed by the 184
Kiriattil class. Those who carry the corpse to the pyre 613 ●
are dressed as women, their cloths being wet, and each [564]
carries a knife on his person. Two junior male members of the taravād thrust pieces of mango wood into the southern end of the burning pyre, and, when they are lighted, throw them over their shoulders to the southwards without looking round. Close to the northern end of the pyre, two small sticks are fixed in the ground, and tied together with a cloth, over which water is poured thrice. All members of the taravād prostrate to the ground before the pyre. They follow the enangu carrying the pot of water round the pyre, and go home without looking round. They pass to the northern side of the house under an arch made by two men standing east and west, holding at arms length, and touching at the points, the spade that was used to dig the pit under the pyre, and the axe with which the wood for the pyre was cut or felled. 'After this is done the kodali ceremony, using the spade, axe, and big knife. These are placed on the leaves where the corpse had lain. Then follows circumambulation and prostration by all, and the leaves are committed to the burning pyre."

In connection with the death ceremonies, it is noted 763
in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that "the last 184

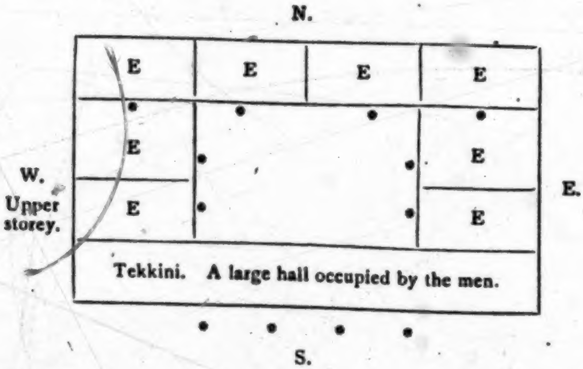
342
[823] west, never north or south; as a rule, it faces the east.
Every garden is enclosed by a bank, a hedge, or a fencing
351 of some kind, and entrance is to be made at one point
only, the east, where there is a gate-house, or, in the case
of the poorest houses, a small portico or open doorway
roofed over. One never walks straight through this;
[184] there is always a kind of stile to surmount. It is the
same everywhere in Malabar, and not only amongst the
342 Nâyars. The following is a plan of a nâlapura or four-
556 sided house, which may be taken as representative of
the houses of the rich :—



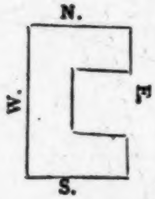
Numbers 6 and 7 are rooms, which are generally used for storing grain. At A is a staircase leading to the room of the upper storey occupied by the female members of the family. At B is another staircase leading to the rooms of the upper storey occupied by the male members. There is no connection between the portions allotted to the men and women. No. 8 is for
[532] the family gods. The Karanavans and old women of
[613] the family are perpetuated in images of gold or silver,
[735] or, more commonly, brass. Poor people, who cannot

342
556

afford to have these images made, substitute a stone. [532]
Offerings are made to these images, or to the stones at [613]
every full moon. The throat of a fowl will be cut outside, [735]
and the bird is then taken inside and offered. The [782]
entrance is at C.



There are windows at * * *. E are rooms occupied by women and children. It may be noticed that the [513] apartment where the men sleep has no windows on the side of the house which is occupied by women. The latter are relatively free from control by the men as to who may visit them. We saw, when speaking of funeral [351] ceremonies, that a house is supposed to have a courtyard, and, of course, it has this only when there are four sides to the house. The nālapura is the proper form of house, for in this alone can all ceremonial be observed in orthodox fashion. But it is not the 342 ordinary Nāyar's house that one sees all over Malabar.



The ordinary house is roughly of the shape here indicated. Invariably there is an upper storey. There are no doors, and only a few tiny windows opening to the west. Men sleep at one end, women [513] at the other, each having their own staircase. Around the house there is

event the festival is held yearly to Bhagavati and her 796
followers. The festival lasts for seven days. When I [773]
visited it in 1895, the last day was on the 31st of March. Before daybreak of the first day, the ordinary temple priest, a Mūssad, will leave the temple after having swept it and made it clean; and (also before daybreak) [793]
five Nambūtiris will enter it, bearing with them sudhi kalasam. The kalasam is on this occasion made of the [237]
five products of the cow (panchagavyam), together with [778]
some water, a few leaves of the banyan tree, and darbha grass, all in one vessel. Before being brought to the [789]
temple, mantrams or magic verses will have been said over it. The contents of the vessel are sprinkled all about the temple, and a little is put in the well, thus purifying the temple and the well. The Nambūtiris [793]
will then perform the usual morning worship, and, either immediately after it or very soon afterwards, they leave the temple, and the Mūssad returns and resumes his office. The temple belongs to four taravāds, and no [613]
sooner has it been purified than the Kāranavans of [783]
these four taravāds, virtually the joint-owners of the temple (known as Urālas) present to the temple servant (Pishārodi) the silver flag of the temple, which has been in the custody of one of them since the last festival. The Pishārodi receives it, and hoists it in front of the temple (to the east), thus signifying that the festival has begun. While this is being done, emphasis and grandeur [441]
is given to the occasion by the firing off of miniature [201]
mortars such as are common at all South Indian festivals. After the flag is hoisted, there are hoisted all round the temple small flags of coloured cloth. For the next [788]
few days there is nothing particular to be done beyond the procession morning, noon, and night; the image of Bhagavati being carried on an elephant to an orchestra

way of preliminary, a high kick in the air, followed by 526
squatting on the haunches, bounding high, turning,
twisting, pirouetting, and all the time swinging the
sword unceasingly above, below, behind the back, under
the arm or legs, in ever so many impossible ways.
Nâyar shields are made of wood, covered with leather,
usually coloured bright red. Within the boss are some
hard seeds, or metal balls loose in a small space, so that
there is a jingling sound like that of the small bells on
the ankles of the dancer, when the shield is oscillated or
shaken in the hand. The swords are those which were
used ordinarily for fighting. There are also swords of
many patterns for processional and other purposes, more
or less ornamented about the handle, and half way up
the blade."

"The Nâyars," Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes, 631
"have a distinct feudal organisation, and the division of
their territories had an unmistakeable reference to it.
The territorial unit was the dêsam, presided over by a
Dâsavazhi. A number of dêsams adjoining one another
constituted a nâdu, which was under the jurisdiction of
a chieftain called the Nâduvazhi. Above the Nâduvazhis
was the Râjah, the highest suzerain in the country. In
course of time, each nâdu split itself up into a certain
number of taras, over the affairs of which a Karanavan,
or elder, presided. An assembly of these Karanavans [613]
constituted the six hundred—an old socio-military [623]
organisation of the Nâyars in mediæval times. These 631
six hundred are referred to in two places in the second 175
Syrian Christian document, which bears the date 925 623
A.D. In a South Travancore inscription, dated 371
M.E., the same organisation is referred to as Venat-
tarunuru, or the six hundred of Venad, and one of
their duties evidently related to the supervision of the

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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121 complex, contradictory, and difficult material collected by many au-
611 thors, and, second, to test the Ceylon model of the association of hy-
564 pergamy with unilineal descent. It will be recalled that Gough's Kumbapettai village seemed to include the variations in kinship found dispersed over a large area in Ceylon. On the Malabar coast, the situation is, if possible, made even more complicated: in this famous region we find every possible variation of our model, from matrilineal hypergamous systems to endogamous and patrilineal hypergamous systems, all existing pell-mell in the same area. In general, it seems clear that these various features are used as structural indices to dis-
[554] tinguish communities from one another. The over-all pattern, by contrast, seems uncluttered: in lower levels of social rank we find, on the whole, endogamous castes which so far as the material goes exhibit the fundamental characteristics of the general structure. In the higher levels of Hindu and Muslim society we find an intense preoccupation with status and social rank, and unilineal descent systems are built out of the general structure. Then, in the limiting cases, each matrilineage behaves as if it were a single unique caste having only hypergamous connections with the outside world.

In this section, I shall first attempt to establish the existence of the general structure in castes in both North and South Malabar, and I shall then go on to examine the questions of descent and hypergamy.
[197] Before we come to specific cases, I should observe that the region ex-
[171] hibits an impressive general cultural uniformity: the language, Malayalam, is very closely related to Tamil; the details of the customs find immediate echoes not only in the material from the rest of South India but among Buddhists in Ceylon as well. Quite apart from struc-
[184] tural matters, there is an intuitive appreciation of the fact that we are in a civilization with a distinctive style of its own in which the different customs of discrete groups appear as permutations and combinations of the same set of general ideas.

101 The term Nayar covers a motley collection of categories of people.
564 Primarily, they are aristocratic Nayar descended from the important royal houses of Cochin and Travancore. There are also people of servant castes who have allegedly taken on the Nayar title in the last century and are only Nayar by courtesy. Some of these categories may be fully endogamous and others, at the higher levels, hypergamous. Though there are again uniformities, it is important to specify which
• 613 group of Nayar are being considered. The word *taravad,* used by various castes in Malabar, denotes a group of matrilineally related persons with the same name who observe rules of exogamy. The *taravad* may be split into smaller property-holding groups, each with a head *Karanavan.*[7]

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[7] "One who 'acts' ": comp. *Karanava,* "to do" in Sinhalese.

NORTH NAYAR

Anthropological investigations in Malabar have usually gone straight 613
to the most spectacular cases: the matrilineal Nayar *taravad* of 114
Cochin and Travancore. This tendency, though understandable, is
hardly justified, since the matrilineal *taravad* achieves its greatest
elaboration among the aristocratic ranks of the ruling families and
can hardly be accepted as a typical feature of the landscape.

It should be clear that today there is great variation in practice 613
among the Nayar groups in Malabar, not only from the aristocrats to 114
the low-caste menials (who like to call themselves Nayar) but also 184
within the same Nayar "subcastes." In an illuminating passage, Karve [554]
(1953), for example, notes how many individual Nayar feel that they
should lay the foundations for a new *taravad* in their sister's name as
soon as they can afford to do so, for a named matrilineal *taravad* is
clearly an important aspect of status for Nayar men. Gough (1952*a*)
has used a historical model to deal with the variations. She argues, in
effect, that the past was orderly and the present is confused. Theory
and practice were harmonious in the past but are now breaking down.
The tempo of new developments, political, economic, social, can
hardly be denied, but we can suggest that the past idealized by Gough
may well have been as diverse (in terms of the structure of matrilineal
taravad) as the present. It is likely that there always were nascent,
medium-sized, and fully developed *taravad* based on the same principles.

We shall examine the aristocratic Nayar lineages in a moment. In 613
North Malabar, the *taravad* is significantly different from the region [184]
around the Cochin kingdoms. In the North, there was apparently less
political centralization and a relatively limited development of subcategories
of Nayar castes with special duties. Most of the Nayar were
called Nambiar and were small landowners who lived in villages.
They recognized dispersed matrilineal clans, and the property group [614]
in the locality was regarded as a segment of such a clan.

At marriage the girl moved to the household of her husband, but 591
she returned temporarily to her natal household to bear her children [844]
(a custom still followed among the Sinhalese). The children when [171]
grown went to their MB; the males stayed with the MB as members of [851]
matri-lines and the females were married off from that house. [613]

Here, clearly, are the complex claims on the sister and her children. 601
I need hardly point out that all aspects of the general structure are [602]
to be seen in their organization. First, the usual Dravidian terminology
was used for reference (Schneider and Gough, 1961, p. 404). A clear
distinction was made between the categories for reference and the

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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601 terms of address. Related to this Dravidian terminology we find, as
[605] might be expected, that all parallel cousins on both sides are forbidden
[582] as sexual partners and consequently there is categorical cross-cousin
602 marriage (p. 397). We are not given any details regarding the
circle of kin which we have called the micro-caste, for Gough is again
more concerned with "lineages." However, it is quite clear that all the
[171] kinship customs, especially the obligations between the various categories
of kin, appear very similar to the Sinhalese.

601 The categories of the terminology are widely extended and relations
602 with paternal kin are formally defined. The son, for instance,
[769] must make annual offerings to his dead father's spirit. "Paternal kin
are known and accorded kinship terms within a range of three to five
generations" (Gough, 1955*a*, p. 55). The father's sister's son was considered
to have special claims on the girl (Schneider and Gough,
1961, p. 398).

602 It is noteworthy that with the residence pattern in which men live
591 on lineage land with their MB, it is precisely the rights of the paternal
kin that are emphasized in customary rituals. Thus paternal kin have
an important place in all *rites de passage:* first pregnancy, naming,
first rice feeding, *tali*-tying, marriage, first menstruation, and death.
[553] At the naming ceremony, for instance, the infant's father's mother
[431] chooses the name, the father's father confers it, and the father gives a
gold gift (Schneider and Gough, 1961, p. 401).

These rights and obligations are of interest in contrast to the Sinhalese,
[171] where residence tends to be patrilocal and where it is, in fact,
the claims of the maternal kin that are given the most prominence in
the various life-cycle ceremonies.

602 We should observe that even the joking relationship, which is an
605 interesting feature of the Sinhalese cross-cousin relationship, is duplicated
171 in North Malabar: "Male and female cross cousins had a joking
relationship with implicit sexual privileges." And, of course, marriage
was initiated with the "gift of the cloth."

582 So far as the general structure is concerned, there is little doubt as
121 to where we are. However, we are not given much information regarding
endogamy and hypergamy. Gough notes only incidentally that
[114] "ordinary" Nambiars . . . married exclusively with each other"
[611] (1955*a*, p. 56), which suggests kin group endogamy with a likely diminution
of unilineal descent ideology in such groups. Gough elsewhere
[613] also observes in passing that there were "hypergamous marriages in
aristocratic lineages" (1961, p. 400), which conforms to the idea expressed
above. Since the pattern can be seen with greater clarity in the
evidence regarding the Cochin aristocrats, I refrain from discussing the
question of hypergamy here.

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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564 here turns out to be patrilineal and patrilocal. We shall see that, as
611 usual, the question of descent is attached to the same general struc-
[591] tures as elsewhere.

We first note that the "patrilineage" of the South is called a *taravad*
• 613 like the matrilineal units of the Nayar. The patrilineage is reported to
be exogamous with a depth of five to seven generations united by the
595 worship of lineage gods, ancestors, and snakes. Marriage tends to be
[591] patrilocal, and one of the interesting features of the Tiyyar of this
[171] area is that, as with the Sinhalese, polyandrous marriages are freely
permitted. A woman is married to a group of brothers who have access
585 to her, it is said, by order of seniority. The ceremony of marriage
171 again involves the gift of the cloth, and we note the custom of feeding
the groom or grooms and the bride with porridge and milk as with
various groups in Ceylon.

593 Inheritance is in the male line, but women retain rights in their
[428] natal household. Indeed, this right is expressed in the customary rela-
tions between brothers and sisters. At divorce, the woman returns to
[586] her brother. Her eldest brother is considered her guardian. At the
[765] death of a married woman, her brothers and their children observe
[183] ritual pollution. At the death of a man, his sister's sons observe pol-
lution and perform mourning offerings to his spirit.

604 The customary claim of the MB and the FZ are given recognition in
588 numerous ceremonies. In the prepuberty rituals, a girl goes through
[613] a mock-marriage ceremony with a boy from a "lineage" into which
[605] she might marry, who clearly stands to her in the relation of cross-
cousin. Her "mother's brother's wife" (FZ?) parts her hair in certain
pregnancy ceremonies. The ritual husband-boy is brought by his MB,
and the girl by her MB. The boy places the *tali* necklace—indicative
of married status—on her neck, where it is tied by her FZ.

582 Gough notes that cross-cousin marriage is "preferential," though
605 with the observation that it is not "enjoined to the extent" that it is
114 in the North (1955*a*, p. 62). It is clear that this statement refers to
actual cross-cousin, not categorical cross-cousin, marriage. We are
informed that parallel cousins on both sides are tabooed and must
conclude that here again we have the Dravidian pattern of categori-
cal cross-cousin marriage.

601 I have no information about the terminology of reference or address,
576 though it seems likely that terms of reference, at least, are identical to
those of the North Tiyyar.

121 I think that all the elements of the general structure can be detected
602 in this system. There is categorical cross-cousin marriage, and the
various claims of the MB and FZ upon Ego are indicated in ritual
terms. This is quite in accordance, as we noted before, with the strong

claim of the brothers and sisters upon one another, a point which is 121
indeed specifically made by Gough (1955*a*, p. 61). 602

In view of all this evidence, it is somewhat disconcerting to discover 602
that Gough finds it necessary to identify "residual matrilineages" to 613 •
explain the role of maternal kin as well as the taboos on maternal 114
parallel cousins in this caste. We are faced once more with the inexplicable bias in the direction of "lineage" explanations to the exclusion of others even in so sophisticated an observer as Dr. Gough.

She notes (1957*a*, p. 61) that "the former existence of exogamous 602
matrilineal clans underlines this persistence of the bond between 614
women and their natal kinfolk, especially their brothers." But the 114
evidence she gives (p. 60) to show even the former existence of such clans is hardly convincing: "My informants knew nothing about these clans except that they were once exogamous. They are not so today, since some people do not remember their clan names. Though the [582]
clans have died out, marriage is prohibited between known matrilineal kin."

Although the general structure is verified in this group as well, we 602
have no information regarding hypergamy. We can only say with 611
certainty that the comparison of the Tiyyar in North and South [582]
Malabar shows quite directly that slight variations permit the general structure to be linked to a patrilineal as well as a matrilineal descent ideology. The underlying theme is general, and the variations in descent, in residence, in inheritance are local and highly specific.

THE MATRILINEAL CASTES OF COCHIN AND HYPERGAMY

Before we turn to an examination of the aristocratic matrilineages of 121
Cochin which have fascinated many anthropologists by their perfectly 564
logical but highly exotic solutions to sex and marriage, I wish to 582
underline some of the principles of endogamy and hypergamy. 613

First, the purpose of endogamy is to cut off the unit from kinship connections with other units. A complete severance of all intercourse (food and sex are usually chosen as symbols) renders the unit unique, but it will not in itself establish hierarchical superiority. To express hierarchy (as well as separation) some asymmetrical relations are logically necessary. In endogamous castes this takes the form of asymmetrical forms of address, dress symbolism, and, significantly, a rule such as "They will take food from us (*A*), but we will not take food from them (*B*)—*A*, in other words, is superior to *B*.

Second, when the groups are placed on an interlocking hierarchy, more subtle expressions can be used. "*A* will not accept food from *B*,

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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121 but *B* will from *A*; furthermore, *A* will not 'give' women to *B*, but
564 will 'take' women from *B*." The second method (hypergamy), though
582 only a logical development of the first, and a very precise way of
613 manifesting superior status, has complex implications. In effect, a progressive distinction of status is made between the children of the sister (superior) and the children of the brother (inferior). Hence not merely the caste but the entire network of kinship is placed on a gradient of ritual status. Furthermore, if hypergamy is to be combined with lineages, it should be clear that, although the matter can be harmoniously combined with matrilineages (i.e., the brother partaking of the superior ritual connections of his sister), the patrilineal principles raise difficult problems, since the sister is given "away" to a superior group and the brothers can partake in the increase in ritual status only by reason of their claims on her children or in some other indirect fashion. Also, since the position of the woman affects the status of her children in both matrilineal and patrilineal contexts, it appears difficult to combine intracaste hypergamy with patrilineal descent at least in South India. Thus we get ZD marriage (i.e., symmetrical exchange) coupled with Brahman caste endogamy in Tanjore, but an entire scale of hypergamous matrilineages all the way from Kshatriya to Sudra status in Malabar. A similar feature was observed in eastern Ceylon.

The first method (endogamy) permits the ethnographer to make simple statements about discrete categories of people; the second (hypergamy) is more complex, since the status-bearing unit can be a single lineage with hypergamous connections and it may be difficult in the continuous descending steps of status to say exactly where one "caste" category ends and the next begins (see fig. 37).

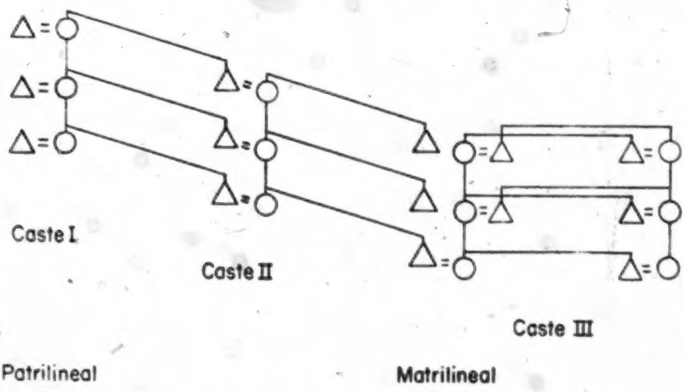

Figure 37. Patrilineal and matrilineal hypergamy.

Let us now return to the facts:

The Nayar family in Cochin and South Malabar (also referred to 613
as Central Kerala) is also organized on the principles of the matrilineal
taravad. Among ordinary people, matrilineal groups beyond the house-
hold are barely recognized for most intents and purposes, but among
the wealthy and aristocratic classes, the *taravad* finds an impressive
elaboration. Gough presents the ideal model as a matrilineal clan [114]
with localized matri-lines all of which are exogamous. The women
have equal or hypergamous connections with men of other *taravad*
or castes, whereas the men visit women of lower *taravad*. The resi- 591
dential pattern is that brothers and sisters live in the same house-
hold and men visit their "wives" in their own households. This con- [184]
trasts with the North Nayar picture in which women join their [191]
husbands in their houses, and with the Mapilla picture (their Muslim
neighbors) in which the men join their wives in the houses as in
Ceylon. Of course, in a climate and region where houses are easily [602]
built and where the kin of both the husband and the wife are quite
likely to be in the near vicinity of the married couple, if not in the
same community, these residential arrangements may be looked upon
primarily as symbolic statements of "difference" rather than funda-
mental differences in kinship systems and sentiments.

We may now raise further questions:

First: to what extent does our previous discussion of the general 121
structure help us to understand the Nayar situation? A careful exami- 114
nation of the data makes it clear that the Nayar family in Cochin
and South Malabar presents a further elaboration upon the Dravidian
theme. It should be emphasized that this is hardly the impression one
would have received from the earlier work of Gough. It is curious to [613]
observe, as Dumont (1961*a*) does, to what extent Gough's picture of [602]
the Nayar situation has progressively altered from one in which there [582]
were matrilineages with hardly any recognition of the role of the
pater, to one in which the father and his kin are recognized and
"preferential" cross-cousin marriage is at least observed. The change
in point of view is a sobering thought as far as "objective" anthro-
pology is concerned: for a perusal of the writings of this highly ob-
servant and careful author shows that she is using an African model
(including concepts of clanship and ties of ritual collaboration) in
her earlier work. It is only very gradually that she comes around to
consider her material in its context in South India.

As far as we can observe, the kin terminology of the high-caste 121
Nayar of Cochin and South Malabar is structurally identical to that 601
of North Malabar and hence to the Dravidian terminology of cross- 114
cousin marriage, with one significant difference: there appears to be 184
no term for actual cross-cousins. It is true that Gough does not provide 605

121 a consistent terminology of reference—which is important in South
601 India and Ceylon—but since the language and indeed all the rest of
114 the terms themselves are identical to those of North Malabar, the lack
[184] of terms precisely for cross-cousins may be significant. The matter is
[605] all the more curious since such terms as, for example, *maru mahan* (son "by marriage"!)[*] which Ego uses for ZS in the same *taravad* and which reciprocates with MB (*mama*) also carry the implication "son-in-law" and "father-in-law."

121 However we may wish to interpret this intriguing lacuna (could it
582 be an aspect of Nambudiri–Nayar hypergamy?), it appears that there
605 is, first, a prohibition on sexual and marital connections with parallel
114 cousins and also a "preference" for cross-cousin marriage. Both rules
[834] are clearly present, though they do not carry the categorical implication which is attached to them elsewhere.

Gough's account of this matter is not very clear. She notes first (1961, p. 365): "Bilateral cross-cousin marriage was freely permitted, with some preference for marriage to the mother's brother's daughter or step-daughter." A little further on she notes the "preference" in passing: "It may seem strange that preferred cross-cousin marriage should have existed side by side with group marriage, for cross-cousin marriage . . . suggests an interest in prolonging the ties brought about both by paternity and by matrilineal kinship."

114 It seems to me that even in her most recent publication Gough is
121 trying to minimize the role of paternity among the Nayar when the
582 facts are palpably otherwise. She notes, "Many men, presumably,
851 entered marriage relations with cross-cousins only incidentally—often, presumably, without being fully aware of the blood relationship" (1961, p. 365)—a presumption which seems extremely unlikely even in the Malabar conditions she describes.

121 We should perhaps stress that Gough's data suggest much closer
114 similarities to a South Indian pattern than her theoretical framework
605 permits. Consider the customary relations between cross-cousins: "Cross-cousins of the same sex and caste had a familiar, mildly joking relationship if they maintained contact . . . cross-cousins of the opposite sex might talk to each other with rather more freedom than to
[588] unrelated persons. In his role of enangan a boy sometimes tied the
[613] tali for his maternal uncle's daughter . . ." (1961, pp. 364–365).

We should note this last sentence particularly: the role of *enangan*
121 as a cross-cousin and hence a perpetual affine on the Dravidian pattern
114 is a new development in the work of Gough. It confirms our impres-
•613 sion that even in Cochin where the *taravad* reaches its greatest devel-
184 opment, a version of the general structure is still visible. The question
[605] of "perpetual affinity" has been discussed extensively by Dumont

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[*] See the discussions of *maru* by Karve (1953, p. 213) and by Dumont (1957*a*).

(1961*b*, pp. 20 ff.), and it is important in tying the Nayar material into 121
the South Indian picture. 613

With all these similarities, in what sense, then, is this system a [114]
logical elaboration of the general structure? What makes the structure [847]
of kinship among the aristocratic Nayar a special case is that in it we find again the combination of hypergamy and unilineal descent.

As we noted above, extensive hypergamy in the context of matrilineage results in a consistent differentiation of status between lineages, and it allows special ritual status to be claimed by each autonomous matrilineage. It will be observed that matrilateral cross-cousin marriage is the only consistent pattern that can be associated with the hypergamous and matrilineal kin structure described above.

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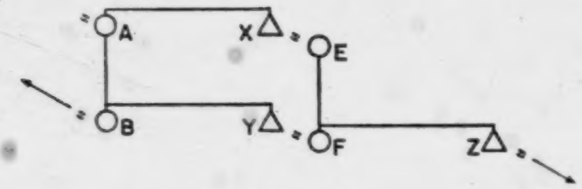

Figure 38. Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage.

In figure 38, sister A establishes a *sambandam* connection with a person of superior status. Her children, B and Y (members of the matrilineage), are themselves superior in status to the children of their MB (X), who has a *sambandam* with a woman of equal or lower status to himself (E). Hence if cross-cousin marriage is to take place, the MBD (F) may be hypergamously connected with Y (i.e., matrilateral cross-cousin marriage), but B, like her mother A, will be given further up the hierarchy and cannot be permitted to have *sambandam* with Z (i.e., patrilateral cross-cousin marriage).

We should note in passing that this association of MBD marriage 121
and hypergamy in these castes is a remarkable corroboration of Leach's 114
hypothesis regarding the structural implications of matrilateral cross- 582
cousin marriage systems. Leach (1951) writes of patrilineal systems 611
associated with hypogamy (women go down) among the Kachin. It is [171]
certainly salutary to find that this mirror-image of Leach's model, that is, matrilateral cross-cousin marriage in a matrilineal context, is associated with hypergamy, asymmetry, and distinctions of status.

To return to Malabar, the combination of matrilineal descent to- 121
gether with the rules of hypergamy is consistent with great differenti- 564
ation of status between the descent groups—so much so that in the 611
proliferation of descent groups it appears to be difficult, indeed impossible, to say where one caste ends and the other begins. Some de-

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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121 scent groups may be generally placed in the highest categories and
564 still be connected by a chain of descending unions with such categories
611 as the Sudra. To recall the situation in Ceylon, such groups as the
[171] Karava (Fishers), who are usually seen as a "separate" caste in other
parts of the island, are associated with the hierarchy of Vellalar
matrilineal descent groups on the eastern littoral. Thus, in the Malabar context, too, a category such as Nayar covers a wide spectrum of
121 ranked descent groups. Gough suggests that apart from the royal
564 matrilineages of the various kingdoms, it is possible to detect five
• [613] subcategories of Nayar groups (1961, pp. 308–309): (*a*) Kiriattil and
Vellayma Nayar, (*b*) Puratta Charna (Outdoor Retainers) Nayar (but these have subdivisions such as Pariccha Menon (Leaders of the Shield), (*c*) Agatta Charna (Indoor Retainers) Nayar, (*d*) Pallichan Nayar, and (*e*) Sudra Nayar. This is not a hard and fast hierarchy and we are told (p. 309) that "In some districts they ranked in the order given and men of the higher [category] might marry women of the lower [category]; the reverse was in theory forbidden. In other districts the [categories] seem to have disputed for precedence and *not to have regularly intermarried*" (my italics).

121 It is clear that in this system it is possible, for instance, to have
564 at the top a single matrilineage whose men may be connected to a
613 small group of matrilineages who are equals and who marry among
themselves. They in turn may be connected with a larger group of matrilineages of a still lower caste, and so on. Furthermore, actual *sambandam* connections may or may not be systematically established between the levels. As long as the principles are clear, it hardly matters what the status-bearing groups are called: in widening circles we have the matrilineage, which may be part of a hypergamous cluster (category), which in turn may be part of a more inclusive "subcaste" or indeed an endogamous caste.

121 Also in the Cochin region, according to Gough (1961, p. 319), hy-
114 pergamy is a custom of the aristocratic matrilineages and is associated
564 with the prestige of unilineal descent, whereas in the levels "below
613 the Nayar temple menials" the categories were endogamous "as is
usual in the caste system throughout India."

[833] Why hypergamy at the aristocratic levels? Gough in answer to this
question has taken a curious combination of materialist-psychoana-
[554] lytic arguments: it is her theory that hypergamy accords with the
power structure of the political system and with the special reasons why virgins must be deflowered by powerful men before they are safe for ordinary mortals (see Gough 1955*a* and 1961, *passim*).

Dumont has proposed an important, but very different, answer. He notes rightly that the most powerful and superior Nayar lineage still had hypergamous connections with Brahman who were ritually superior but politically inferior to the royal lineages. This would indicate that the arguments emanating from the power structure are of limited value. Nor does the psychoanalytic argument carry conviction (see Yalman, 1963). 121 114 564 613

Dumont further suggests that the Nayar position has significant cultural affinities to certain practices of the Basavi. Among the Basavi, a girl is given in marriage to a god. She may then be approached by all kinds of men, and the children she may bear belong to her own family. Thus by virtue of her marriage to a god, her children are freed from the constraints of the rule of patrilineal descent and follow matrilineal descent. In the same fashion, Dumont thinks the girls of aristocratic matrilineages are married to Nambudiri Brahman, who are referred to as "Gods of the Earth."

Dumont's point is worth making, for it shows the element of piety involved in these customs which have been severely misunderstood in India and elsewhere. The man of the matrilineage sacrifices his own children (who belong to others) in order to give his sister to a god and keep her children.

This may indeed be one of the cultural dimensions of hypergamy in this region, but the system is so clearly and effectively associated with the fundamental structural principles of matrilineal descent groups in a caste context that the specific cultural features (piety, etc.) do not need to be treated as a necessary part of the picture. A similar set of structural circumstances gives rise to an essentially similar picture in Ceylon. 121 564 613 [171]

The general principles of status differentiation in Cochin have been subsumed under the following ideal formula by Karve (1953, p. 269): [851]

Nambudiri	m.	marries	Nambudiri f.	Children	become	Nambudiri
Nambudiri	m.	=	Ksatriya f.	Children	=	Kshatriya
Ksatriya	m.	=	Ksatriya f.	Children	=	non-Kshatriya [*sic.*]
Nambudiri	m.	=	Nayar f.	Children	=	Nayar, status 1
Ksatriya	m.	=	Nayar f.	Children	=	Nayar, status 2
Nayar	m.	=	Nayar f.	Children	=	Nayar, status 3

It is quite clear that we find the matrilineal *taravad* in its most impressive development as a corporation precisely at the highest levels of society. At the other end of the scale we have only the desire for prestige:

> The Tharvad is always named after an ancestress and referred to as the Tharvad of so and so (woman). If a man does not belong to a Tharvad he is not respected and I was told by an officer in a mill that though he was well educated and a salaried man he had not the requisite social position as

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
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they were landless orphans. If he bought land, built a house and settled there with his sister, bringing up her children, he would gain social status. He said he knew of many a poor labourer serving in the mill, saving money to establish a Tharvad in his sister's name and become "somebody" in his caste. (Karve, 1953, p. 267)

The problem of finding suitable husbands for the women of aristocratic matrilineal Tharvads has been solved by the Nambudiri Brahman connection in Cochin. The situation is not very different with North Malabar aristocrats. We are told that the Kolattiri lineage had difficulty in getting accepted as of high status among the ancient "Kshatriya" lineages of Kottayam and Kurumbranad, so the Kolattiri Rajas brought a caste called Koil Tamburan from Travancore. "Kolattiri women married Koil Tamburan or Nambudiri men and Kolattiri men Samantan Nambiar or Nambiar women" (Gough, 1955*a*, p. 56).

Karve with her usual insight and evocative examples puts the issue simply (1953, pp. 258–259): "The Kshatriyas claim descent from the sun-family of the ancient Hindu Kshatriyas of the north—the house of Rama. All the sons born in Kshatriya families, i.e., ruling houses of Travancore and Cochin have Sanskrit names of the Sun-god with the suffix varmā . . . We have already seen that in olden times as a rule and even now generally the Kshatriya women have Nambudiri Brahmins as husbands. . . . There is a village near Cochin belonging to a rich Nayar Thārvad . . . which is called the 'village of evening visits of the Nambudris.'" And this accurate and colorful picture is rounded up with the direct statement, "Among poorer Nayars cross-cousin marriage is favoured."

Other Evidence from Malabar

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We have considered the evidence from Malabar from the point of view of other South Indian systems and have, I believe, been able to establish both the principles of the general structure and the association of systems of hypergamy with unilineal descent. A further point to note is that systems of descent, at least in this region, could be considered as a secondary feature to a large extent independent of the specific forms of kinship and marriage. Very similar groups appear to follow different forms of descent in various regions. We should [171] recall that even the Sinhalese, who are regarded as being "patrilineal" by many authors today, followed "matrilineal" descent at least among the royal family in the seventeenth century. And conversely one author has noted that in some parts of Kerala "the Nairs also follow the father right social system" (D'Souza, 1959, p. 493).

[564] There is a vast body of literature, especially in connection with

Malabar, in which patrilineal and matrilineal castes who are similar 121
in their kinship customs are described, and again we find that other 564
sections of the same casts are patrilineal or matrilineal in different 611
localities. In parts of Ceylon I would hear villagers suggest that sons [171]
took their "names" from their father and daughters from their
mother, a reflection not so much of descent (for these ideas were not
applied in practice) but of the difference between the sexes.

Even the Muslims are not very different. On the Malabar coast the 779
diversity of origins in the Muslim community can be easily traced in 184
the complex body of customs, appellations, different signs, and prac- 602
tice whereby subgroups appear to distinguish one another. Gough 613
(1961) has discussed some features of the matrilineal Muslims (Ma- 121
pilla); D'Souza (1959) in a carefully documented article observes that,
leaving aside a special group who call themselves *Arabi* and attempt
to follow traditional Islam, Muslims in general conform to the patterns
of kinship usual in Malabar and are divided into patrilineal and
matrilineal *taravads* (p. 492). Moreover, in the case of patrilineal
taravads, several of them again come together to form an *endogamous*
group; hence in any locality there are several endogamous Moplah
groups (p. 493). He goes on to make the following observation (p. 498):

> In the coastal North Malabar, as one proceeds southwards to places like
> Quilandy and Badagara, the mother right social organization undergoes a
> change. The change becomes quite distinct in the coastal region of South
> Malabar. The change in mother right traits . . . may be primarily attributed [428]
> to the fact that whereas in North Malabar the ancestral property is inherited
> exclusively in the female line, in the south it is inherited . . . in the male
> line. But the social organization is essentially mother right and the modifica-
> tions are such as suit the change in the principle of inheritance.

It is not merely this shifting picture of descent and inheritance 121
which strikes one as being entirely in line with the material collected 564
by Iyer (1909, 1912, 1937) in all kinds of small caste groups, for 114
D'Souza (1959, p. 502) firmly establishes that the Muslim Mapilla
also follow the Nambudiri-Nayar model of hypergamy with considerable dedication: "For instance, the Thangal males can marry women from any other groups of Moplahs [Mapilla] but Thangal women cannot marry any man other than a Thangal. An Arabi male can marry any [Mapilla] woman other than a Thangal, but the Arabi woman can marry, besides an Arabi male, only a Thangal male, and so on."

There is little doubt that the marriage customs recorded by D'Souza 121
bear a close similarity to those recorded for the Moors of Ceylon 58
earlier in this volume. D'Souza's evidence on names is not directed to 171
the question of hypergamy and prestige, but it does appear that names [551]